CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE

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MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

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CHILDREN of the VILLAGE

BY

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY F. BARNARD, R. BARNES, M. E. EDWARDS, M. KERNS
C. O. MURRAY, AND OTHER ARTISTS

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ARRANGED AND ENGRAVED BY J. D. COOPER.

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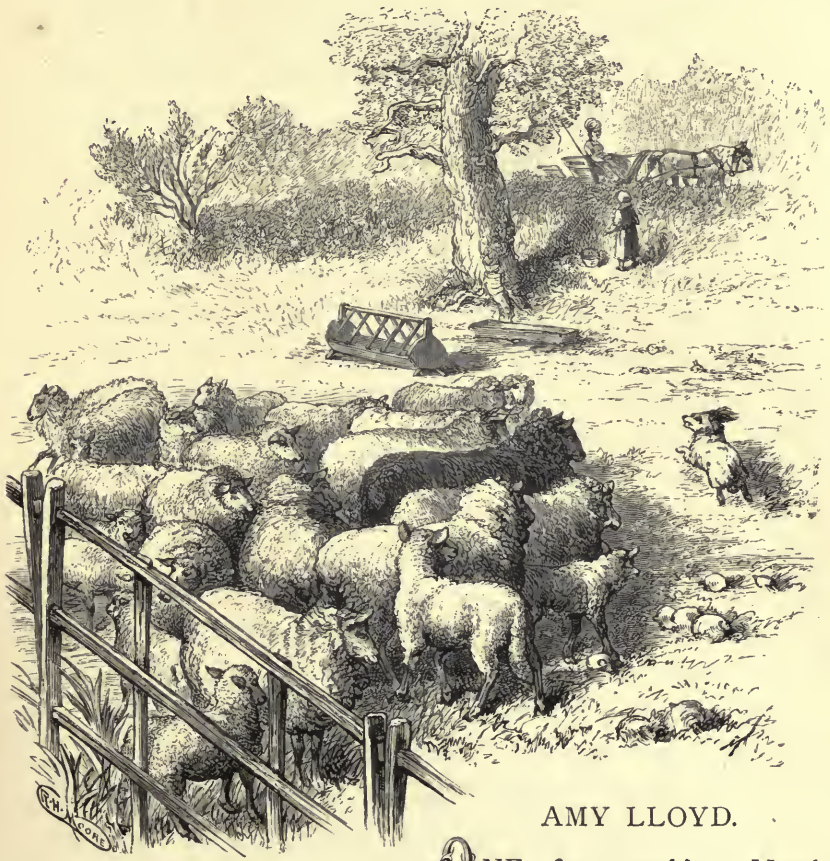
CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE.



AMY LLOYD.

ONE fine sunshiny March morning, a lady, driving herself in a pony-carriage through Aberleigh lane, stopped beside a steep bank to look at a little girl and her dog in the adjoining field. The hedge had

been closely cut, except where a tuft of hazel with its long tassels hung over some broom in full flower, and a straggling bush of the white-blossomed sloe was mixed with some branches of palms, from which the bees were already gathering honey. The little girl was almost as busy as the bees: she was gathering violets, white violets and blue, with which the sunny bank was covered; and her little dog was barking at a flock of sheep feeding in that part of the field, for it was a turnip field that was hurdled off for their use. The dog was a small French spaniel, one of the prettiest ever seen, with long curly hair, snow white, except that the ears and three or four spots on the body were yellow; large feathered feet and bright black eyes: just the sort of dog of which fine ladies love to make pets.

It was curious to see this beautiful little creature, driving before it a great flock of sheep, ewes, lambs, and all—for sheep are sad cowards! And then, when driven to the hurdles, the sheep, cowards though they were, were forced to turn about; how they would take courage at sight of their enemy, advancing a step or two and pretending to look brave; then it was diverting to see how the little spaniel, frightened itself, would draw back barking towards its mistress, almost as sad a coward as the sheep. The lady sat watching their proceedings with great amusement, and at last addressed the little girl, a nice lass of ten years old in deep mourning.

"Whose pretty little dog is that, my dear?" asked the lady.

"Mine, madam," was the answer.

"And where did you get it? The breed is not common."

"It belonged to poor mamma. Poor papa brought it from France." And the look and the tone told at once that poor Amy was an orphan.

"And you and the pretty dog—what's its name?" said the lady, interrupting herself.

"Flossy, ma'am—dear Flossy!" And Amy stooped to stroke the curly, silky, glossy coat which had probably gained Flossy his appellation; and Flossy in return jumped on his young mistress, and danced about her with tenfold glee.

"You and Flossy live hereabout?" inquired the lady.

"Close by, ma'am; at Court farm, with my uncle and aunt Lloyd."

"And you love Flossy?" resumed the lady;—"You would not like to part with him?"

"Part with Floss!" cried Amy. "Part with my own Flossy!"—and she flung down her violets, and caught her faithful pet in her arms, as if fearful of its being snatched away; and Floss, as if partaking of the fear, nestled up to his young mistress, and pressed his head against her cheek.

"Do not be alarmed, my dear," replied the lady, preparing to drive on; "I am not going to steal your favourite, but I would give five guineas for a dog like him; and if ever you meet with such a one, you have only to send it to Lumley castle. I am Lady Lumley," added she. "Good morning,

love! Farewell, Flossy!" And, with a kind nod, the lady and the pony-chaise passed rapidly by; and Amy and Flossy returned to Court farm.

Amy was an orphan, and had only lately come to live with her good uncle and aunt Lloyd, rough honest country people; and being a shy meek-spirited child, who had just lost most affectionate parents, and had been used to soft voices and gentle manners, was so frightened at the loud speech of the farmer and the blunt ways of his wife, that she ran away from them as often as she could, and felt as forlorn and desolate as any little girl can do who has early learnt the blessed lesson of reliance on the Father of all. Her chief comfort at Court farm was to pet Flossy and to talk to old Dame Clewer, the charwoman, who had been her own mother's nurse.

Dame Clewer had known better days; but having married late in life, and been soon left a widow, she had toiled early and late to bring up an only son; and all her little earnings had gone to apprentice him to a carpenter and keep him decently clothed; and he, although rather lively and thoughtless, was a dutiful and grateful son, and being now just out of his time, had gone to the next town to try to get work, and hoped to repay his good mother all her care and kindness by supporting her out of his earnings. He had told his mother so when setting off the week before, and she had repeated it with tears in her eyes to Amy—tears of joy; and Amy on her return to the house, went immediately in search of her old friend, whom she knew to be washing there, partly to hear over again the story of Thomas

Clewer's goodness, partly to tell her own adventure with Lady Lumley.

In the drying yard, as she expected, Amy found Dame Clewer; not, however, as she expected, smiling and busy, and delighted to see Miss Amy, but sitting on the ground by the side of the

clothes-basket, her head buried in her hands, and sobbing as if her heart would break. "What could be the matter? Why did she cry so?" asked Amy. And Dame Clewer, unable to resist the kind interest evinced by the affectionate child, told her briefly the cause of her distress.—"Thomas had enlisted!" How few words may convey a great sorrow!—"Thomas was

gone for a soldier!"—And the poor mother flung herself at her length on the ground, and gasped and sobbed as though she would never speak again.

"Gone for a soldier!" exclaimed Amy—"Left you! Oh, he never can be so cruel, so wicked! He'll come back, dear nurse!" (for Amy always called Dame Clewer nurse, as her mother had been used to do.) "He'll be sure to come back! Thomas is such a good son, with all his wildness. He'll come back—I know he will."

"He can't!" replied poor nurse, trying to rouse herself from her misery. "He can't come, how much so ever he may wish it; they'll not let him. Nothing can get him off but money, and I have none to give." And again the mother's tears choked her words. "My poor boy must go!"

"Money!" said Amy, "I have half a crown, that godmamma gave me, and two shillings and three sixpences; I'll go and fetch them in a moment."

"Blessings on your dear heart!" sobbed Dame Clewer; "your little money would be of no use. The soldier who came to tell me, offered to get him off for five pounds: but where am I to get five pounds? All my goods and all my clothes would not raise near such a sum: and even if anybody was willing to lend money to a poor old creature like me, how should I ever be able to pay it? No! Thomas must go—go to the East Indies, as the soldier said, to be killed by the sword or to die of the fever!—I shall never see his dear face again! Never!" And turning resolutely from the pitying child, she bent over

the clothes in the basket, trying to unfold them with her trembling hands and to hang them out to dry; but, unable in her agony to separate the wet linen, she burst into a passion of tears, and stood leaning against the clothes' line, which quivered and vibrated at every sob, as if sensible of the poor mother's misery.

Amy, on her part, sat on the steps leading to the house, watching her in silent pity. "Oh, if mamma were alive!" thought the little girl—"or papa! or if I dared ask Aunt Lloyd! or if I had the money of my own; or anything that would fetch the money!" And just as she was thinking this very thought, Flossy, wondering to see his little mistress so still and sad, crept up to her, and put his paw in her lap and whined. "Dear Flossy!" said Amy unconsciously, and then suddenly remembering what Lady Lumley had said to her, she took the dog up in her arms, and coloured like scarlet, from a mingled emotion of pleasure and pain, for Flossy had been her own mamma's dog, and Amy loved him dearly. For full five minutes she sat hugging Flossy and kissing his sleek, shining

head, whilst the faithful creature licked her cheeks and her hands, and nestled up to her bosom, and strove all he could to prove his gratitude and return her caresses. For full five minutes she sat without speaking; at last she went to Dame Clewer, and gave the dog into her arms.

"Lady Lumley offered me five guineas for Flossy this morning," said she; "take him, dear nurse, and take the money; but beg her to be kind to him," continued poor Amy, no longer able to restrain her tears—"beg her to be very kind to my Floss!" And, with a heart too full even to listen to the thanks and blessings which the happy mother was showering upon her head, the little girl turned away.

But did Lady Lumley buy Flossy? And was Thomas Clewer discharged? Yes, Thomas was discharged, for Sir John Lumley spoke to his colonel; and he returned to his home and his fond mother, quite cured of his wildness and his fancy for being a soldier. But Lady Lumley did not buy Floss, because, as she said, however she might like him, she never could bear to deprive so good a girl as Amy of anything that gave her pleasure. She would not buy Floss, but she continued to take great notice both of him and his little mistress, had them often at the castle, always made Amy a Christmas present, and talks of taking her for her own maid when she grows up.

THE MAGPIES.

"COME along, girls! Helen! Caroline! I say, don't stand jabbering there upon the stairs, but come down this instant, or Dash and I will be off without you."

This elegant speech was shouted from the bottom of the great staircase at Dinely Hall, by young George Dinely, an

Etonian of eleven years old, just come home for the holidays, to his two younger sisters, who stood disputing very ardently in French at the top. The cause of contention was, to say the truth, no greater an object than the colour of a workbag, which they were about to make for their mamma: slate lined with pink being the choice of Miss Caroline, whilst Miss Helen preferred drab with a blue lining.

"Don't stand quarrelling there about the colour of your trumpery," added George, "but come along!"

Now George would have scorned to know a syllable of any language except Latin and Greek, but neither of the young ladies being Frenchwomen enough to construe the appellation of the leading article, the words "drab" and "slate," which came forth in native English pretty frequently, as well as the silk dangling in their hands, had enlightened him as to the matter in dispute.

George was a true schoolboy, rough and kind; affecting perhaps more roughness than naturally belonged to him, from a mistaken notion that it made him look bold, and English, and manly. There cannot be a greater mistake, since the boldest man is commonly the mildest, thus realising in every way the expression of Shakespeare, which has been the subject of a somewhat unnecessary commentary, "He's gentle and not fearful." For the rest, our hero loved his sisters, which was very right; and loved to tease them, which was very wrong; and now he and his dog Dash, both wild with spirits and with happiness, were waiting most impatiently to go down

to the village on a visit to old Nurse Simmons and her magpie.

Nurse Simmons was a very good and very cross old woman, who, after ruling in the nursery of Dinely Hall for two generations, scolding and spoiling Sir Edward and his brothers, and performing thirty years afterwards the same good office for Master George and his sisters, had lately abdicated her throne on the arrival of a French governess, and was now comfortably settled at a cottage of her own in the village street.

George Dinely and Dash had already that morning visited George's own pony, and his father's brood mares, the garden, the stables, the pheasantry, the greenhouse, and the farmyard; had seen a brood of curious bantams, two litters of pigs, and a family of greyhound puppies, and had few friends, old or new, left to visit except Nurse Simmons, her cottage, and her magpie, a bird of such accomplishments, that his sisters had even made it the subject of a letter to Eton. The magpie might perhaps claim an equal share with his mistress in George's impatience, and Dash, always eager to get out of doors, seemed nearly as fidgety as his young master.

Dash was as beautiful a dog as one should see in a summer's day; one of the large old English spaniels, which are now so rare, with a superb head like those that you see in Spanish pictures, and such ears! they more than met over his pretty spotted nose, and when he lapped his milk dipped into the pan at least two inches. His hair was long and shiny and wavy, not curly, partly of a rich dark liver colour, partly of a silvery white, and

beautifully feathered about the legs and thighs. Everybody used to wonder that Dash, who apparently ate so little, should be in such good case; but the marvel was by no means so great as it seemed, for his being George's peculiar pet and property did not hinder his being the universal favourite of the whole house, from the drawing-room to the kitchen. Not a creature could resist Dash's silent supplications at meal-times, when he sat upon his haunches looking amiable, with his large ears brought into their most becoming position, his head a little on one side, and his beautiful eyes fixed on your face, with as near an approach to speech as ever eyes made in the world. From Sir Edward and her Ladyship down to the stable-boy and the kitchen-maid, no inhabitant of Dinely Hall could resist Dash! So that being a dog of most apprehensive sagacity with regard to the hours appropriated to the several refections of the family, he usually contrived, between the dining parlour, the school-room, and the servants' hall, to partake of three breakfasts and as many dinners every day, to say nothing of

an occasional snap at luncheon or supper-time. No wonder that Dash was in high condition. His good plight, however, had by no means impaired his activity. On the contrary, he was extremely lively as well as intelligent, and had a sort of circular motion, a way of flinging himself quite round on his hind feet, something after the fashion in which the French dancers twirl themselves round on one leg, which not only showed unusual agility in a dog of his size, but gave token of the same spirit and animation which sparkled in his bright hazel eye. Any thing of eagerness or impatience was sure to excite this motion, and George Dinely gravely assured his sisters, when they at length joined him in the hall, that Dash had flung himself round six and twenty times whilst waiting the conclusion of their quarrel.

Getting out into the lawn and the open air did not tend to diminish Dash's glee or his capers, and the young party walked merrily on ; George telling of school pranks and school misfortunes—the having lost or spoilt four hats since Easter seemed rather to belong to the first class of adventures than the second, —his sisters listening dutifully and wonderingly ; and Dash following his own devices, now turning up a mouse's nest from a water furrow in the park,—now springing a covey of young partridges in a corn-field,—now plunging his whole hairy person in the brook,—and now splashing Miss Helen from head to foot by ungallantly jumping over her whilst crossing a stile, being thereunto prompted by a whistle from his young master, who had, with equal want of gallantry, leapt the style first himself, and left his sisters to get over as they could ; until at last the

whole party, having passed the stile, and crossed the bridge, and turned the churchyard corner, found themselves in the shady recesses of the Vicarage lane, and in full view of the vine-covered cottage of Nurse Simmons.

As they advanced they heard a prodigious chattering and jabbering, and soon got near enough to ascertain that the sound

proceeded mainly from one of the parties they were come to visit—Nurse Simmons's magpie. He was perched in the middle of the road, defending a long dirty bare bone of mutton, doubtless his property, on one end of which he stood, whilst the other extremity was occupied by a wild bird of the same species, who, between pecking at the bone, and fighting and scolding, found full employment. The wild magpie was a beautiful creature, as wild magpies are, of a snowy white, and a fine blue black, perfect in shape and plumage, and so superior in appearance to the tame bird, ragged, draggled, and dirty, that they hardly seemed of the same kind. Both were chattering away most furiously; the one in his natural and unintelligible gibberish, the other partly in his native tongue, and partly in that, for his skill in which he was so eminent,—thus turning his accomplishments to an unexpected account, and larding his own lean speech with divers foreign garnishes, such as "What's o'clock?" and "How do you do?" and "Very well I thank you," and "Poor pretty Mag!" and "Mag's a good bird,"—all delivered in the most vehement accent, and all doubtless understood by the unlearned adversary as terms of reproach.

"What can those two magpies be quarrelling about?" said Caroline, as soon as she could speak for laughing; for on the children's approach the birds had abandoned the mutton bone, which had been quietly borne away by Dash, who in spite of his usual sumptuous fare had no objection to such a windfall, and was lying in great state on a mossy bank, discussing and enjoying the stolen morsel.

"What a fury they are in! I wish I knew what they were saying," pursued Caroline, as the squabble grew every moment more angry and less intelligible.

"They are talking nonsense, doubtless, as people commonly do when they quarrel," quoth George, "and act wisely to clothe it in a foreign tongue; perhaps they may be disputing about colours."

"What an odd noise it is!" continued Caroline, by no means disposed to acknowledge her brother's compliment; "I never heard anything like it."

"I have," said George, drily.

"I wonder whether they comprehend each other!" ejaculated Miss Helen, following her sister's example, and taking no notice of the provoking George; "they really do seem to understand."

"As well as other magpies," observed the young gentleman, "why should they not?"

"But what strange gibberish!" added poor Helen.

"Gibberish, Miss Helen! Don't you hear that the birds are sputtering magpie French, sprinkled with a little magpie English? I was just going to ask you to explain it to me," replied the unmerciful George. "It is quite a parody upon your work-bag squabble," pursued their tormentor; "only that the birds are the wiser, for I see they are parting,—the wild one flying away, the tame gentleman hopping towards us.

Quite the scene of the work-bag over again," continued George, "only with less noise, and much shortened—an abridged and corrected edition! Really, young ladies, the magpies have the best of it," said the Etonian, and off he stalked into Nurse Simmons's cottage.

THE ROBINS.

"WHAT have you got in your hat, Edward?" said Arthur Maynard to his cousin Edward Stanhope, as they met one day in our village street, near which they both resided; "what can you have there? a bird's nest?"

"Oh, I hope not!" exclaimed Julia Maynard, who was walking with her brother and a younger sister, "taking birds' nests is cruel."

"Cruel or not, Miss Julia," replied Edward, "a birds' nest it is. Look, Arthur," continued he, displaying a nest full of poor little unfledged creatures, opening four great mouths as wide as they could gape; "look, they are robins."

"Robins! robin redbreasts! the household bird! the friend of man!" cried Arthur; "take a robin's nest! oh, fie, fie!"

"The robin redbreast," said little Sophy Maynard, "that when the poor Children in the Wood were starved to death, covered them over with leaves. Did you never hear old Nurse Andrews repeat the old ballad? I can almost say it myself:—

'No burial this pretty pair
Of any man receives,
Till Robin Redbreast painfully
Did cover them with leaves,'"—

shouted Sophy: "you that pretend to be so fond of poetry, to take a robin's nest."

"Poetry!" rejoined Edward, contemptuously, "a penny ballad! an old woman's song! call that poetry!"

"I like to hear it, though," persisted little Sophy "I had rather hear Nurse Andrews repeat the Children in the Wood, than anything; call it what names you like."

"And it was but the other day," said Julia, "that papa made me learn some verses just to the same effect out of Mr. Lamb's Specimens. Did you ever hear them?

'Call to the robin redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with flowers and leaves do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.'

Now I am quite sure that these lines are poetry; and, at all events, everybody holds the robin sacred for his social qualities, he is so tame, so confiding, so familiar; no one would ever think of taking his nest, even if birds'-nesting were not the cruellest thing in the world," continued Julia, returning to her first exclamation, "Everybody cherishes the robin."

"So do I," replied her incorrigible cousin; "I am so fond of the Robin and his note that I mean to bring up all four of these young ones, and tame them, and make friends of them."

"Put back the nest, and I will teach you a better way," said Arthur; "for we mean to tame some robins ourselves this summer."

"Put back the nest indeed!" rejoined Edward; "I must make haste home, and get the butler to give me a cage, and Fanny to help me to feed them. Put back the nest indeed!" and off ran the naughty taker of birds' nests, vainly pursued by little Sophy's chidings, by Julia's persuasions, by Arthur's remonstrances, and by the united predictions of all three that he would never rear the unfortunate younglings.

Very true were these predictions. One by one, in spite of all the care of Edward and his sister Fanny, who crammed them twenty times a day with all sorts of food, proper or improper, bread, meat, eggs, herbs, and insects, with every mess,

in short, that they had ever heard recommended for any bird; one by one the poor little shivering creatures, shivering although wrapt in lamb's-wool and swan's-down, pined, and dwindled, and died; and Fanny, a kind-hearted little girl, fretted and cried; and Edward, not less vexed, but too proud to cry, grumbled at his ill-luck, and declared that he would never trouble himself with birds again as long as he lived. "I wonder how Arthur has succeeded with his!" thought he to himself; "I think he and the girls talked of getting some—but of course they all died. I am sure no people could take more pains than Fanny and I. I'll never trouble myself with birds again."

About two months after this soliloquy, the young Stanhopes received an invitation to dine with their cousins, for it was Sophy's birthday, and the children had a half-holiday; and after dinner they were allowed to eat their cherries and strawberries in their own verandah, a place they were all very fond of. And a very pretty place this verandah was.

Fancy a deep shaded trellis running along one end of the house, covered with vines, passion-flowers, clematis, and jessamine, looking over gay flower-beds, the children's own flower-beds, to an arbour of honeysuckle, laburnum, and china-roses, which Arthur had made for Julia; clusters of greenhouse plants, their own pet geraniums, arranged round the pillars of the verandah; and the verandah itself furnished with their own tables and chairs, and littered with their toys and their small garden tools; as pretty an out-of-door playroom as heart could desire.

It was a fine sunny afternoon towards the end of June, and

the young folks enjoyed the fruits and the flowers, and the sweet scent of the bean blossoms and the new-mown hay in the neighbouring fields, and were as happy as happy could be. At last, after the girls had pointed out their richest geraniums and

largest heartsease, and they had been properly praised and admired, Arthur said, "I think it is time to show Edward our robins." And at the word, little Sophy began strewing bread

crumbs at one end of the verandah as fast as her hands could go.

"Bobby! Bobby! pretty Bobby!" cried Sophy; and immediately the prettiest robin that ever was seen came flying out of the arbour towards her; not in a direct line, but zigzag as it were, stopping first at a rose tree, then swinging on the top of a lily, then perching on the branch of a campanula that bent under him —still coming nearer and nearer, and listening, and turning up his pretty head as Sophy continued to cry, "Bobby! Bobby!" and sometimes bowing his body, and jerking his tail in token of pleased acknowledgment, until at last he alighted on the ground, and began picking up the bread crumbs with which it was strewed. Whilst presently two or three young robins with their speckled breasts (for the red feathers do not appear until they are three or four months old) came fluttering about the verandah, flying in and out quite close to the children, hopping round them, and feeding at their very feet; not shy at all, not even cautious like the old birds, who had seen more of the world, and looked at the strangers with their bright piercing eyes rather mistrustfully, as if they knew that there were such things as little boys who take birds' nests, and little girls who keep birds in cages.

"Bobby! pretty Bobby!" continued Sophy, quite enchanted at the good conduct of her pets, and calling upon her cousins for their tribute of admiration. Fanny willingly expressed her delight; and Edward, looking somewhat foolish, wondered how they became so tame.

"We used to throw down the crumbs from breakfast and

dinner in this place all the winter," said Julia ; " the poor birds are so glad of them in the hard weather! And one particular robin used to come for them every day, and grew quite familiar ; he would even wait here for us, and fly to meet us as soon as that quick eye of his spied a white frock turning the corner. So then we began to talk to him, and to feed him regularly."

" I always saved a great bit of my bread for Bobby," interrupted Sophy.

" And he grew as tame as you see ; and when he had young ones, he brought them here with him," resumed her sister.

" You should have seen them the first day," said Sophy ; "that was the prettiest sight. The little things did not know how to help themselves, so there they stood about, some on the geraniums and some on the rose trees, chirping and opening their bills for the old ones to feed them ; and the poor old birds flew about from one to the other with bread crumbs, not taking a morsel themselves. You cannot think how much the young ones ate! There was one great greedy fellow perched on my rake, who made his poor papa bring him seven mouthfuls before he was satisfied. And now they are so saucy! see how saucy they are!" continued the little girl, as one of the boldest came close to her, and caught a crumb which she was flinging to him before it reached the ground, " see how saucy! O pretty, pretty Bobbies! I do love them so."

"We all like the poor confiding creatures who pay us the compliment of trusting so entirely in our kindness and good faith, I believe," said Arthur, half laughing at her eagerness ;

"and after all, Edward," added he, as the two boys, bat in hand, marched off to cricket, "after all, you must confess that our method of taming robins is better than yours, and that one bird who comes to you at liberty, of his own free will, is worth a dozen kidnapped in the nest, luckless wretches, and mewed up in a cage."

Edward confessed that his cousin was right, and never took a bird's nest again.

HARRY LEWINGTON.

"BEG, Frisk, beg!" said little Harry Lewington, as he sat in state on an inverted basket at his grandmother's door, discussing with great satisfaction a huge porringer of bread and milk, whilst his sister Lucy, who had already despatched her breakfast, sat on the ground opposite to him, now twisting the long wreaths of the

convolvulus-major into garlands—now throwing them away. "Beg, Frisk, beg!" repeated Harry, holding a bit of bread just out of the dog's reach; and the obedient Frisk squatted himself on his hind legs, and held up his fore paws, in patient supplication, until it pleased Master Harry to bestow upon him the tempting morsel.

The little boy and the little dog were great friends, notwithstanding that Harry, in the wantonness of power, would sometimes tease and tantalise his poor pet more than a good boy should have done. Frisk loved him dearly, much better than he did Lucy, although Lucy gave him every day part of her breakfast, without making him beg, and would tie pretty ribands round his neck, and pat and stroke his rough head for half an hour together. Harry was Frisk's prime favourite; perhaps because the little dog, being himself of a merry disposition, liked the boy's lively play better than the girl's gentle caresses; perhaps because he recollected that Harry was his earliest patron, and firmest friend, during a time of great trouble: quadrupeds of his species having a knack of remembering past kindness, which it would do the biped, called man, no harm to copy.

Poor Frisk had come as a stray dog to Aberleigh. If he could have told his own story, it would probably have been a very pitiful one, of distresses and wanderings, of "hunger and foul weather," of kicks and cuffs, and all "the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes." Certain it is that he made his appearance at Mrs. Lewington's door in miserable plight, wet, dirty, and half-starved! that there he encountered Harry, who

took an immediate fancy to him, and Mrs. Lewington, who drove him off with a broom; that a violent dispute ensued between the good dame and her grandson, Harry persisting in inviting him in, Mrs. Lewington in frightening him away; that at first it ended in Frisk's being established as a sort of out-door pensioner, subsisting on odds and ends, stray bones and cold potatoes, surreptitiously obtained for him by his young protector, and sleeping in the identical basket which, turned topsy-turvy, afterwards served Harry for a seat; until at length Mrs. Lewington, who had withstood the incessant importunity of the patron, and the persevering humility of his client, was propitiated by Frisk's own doggish exploit in barking away a set of pilferers, who were making an attack on her great pear-tree, and so frightening the thieves, that they not only scampered off in all haste, but left behind them their implements of thievery, a ladder, two baskets and a sack: the good dame being thus actually a gainer by the intended robbery, and so well satisfied with Frisk's conduct, that she not only admitted him into her house, but considered him as one of her most vigilant and valuable inmates, worth all the watchmen that ever sprung a rattle.

The new guard proved to be a four-footed person of singular accomplishments. He could fetch or carry, either by land or by water; would pick up her thimble or cotton, if his old mistress happened to drop them; carry Lucy's little pattens to school in case of a shower; or take Harry's dinner to the same place with unimpeachable honesty. Moreover he was so strong on his hind legs, walked upright so firmly and gracefully, cut so many capers,

and had so good an ear for music, that the more sagacious amongst the neighbours suspected him of having been, at least, the principal performer in a company of dancing dogs, even if he were not the learned dog Munito himself. Frisk and his exploits were the wonder of Aberleigh, where he had now resided a twelvemonth (for August was come round again) with honour and credit to himself, and perfect satisfaction to all parties.

"Beg, Frisk, beg!" said Harry, and gave him, after long waiting, the expected morsel; and Frisk was contented, but Harry was not. The little boy, though a good-humoured fellow in the main, had fits of naughtiness which were apt to last all day, and this promised to be one of his worst. It was a holiday moreover, when he had nothing to do but to be naughty, and in the afternoon his cousins Susan and William were to come and see him and Lucy, and the pears were to be gathered, and the children to have a treat; and Harry, in his impatience thought the morning would never be over, and played such pranks by way of beguiling the time—buffeting Frisk for instance, burning his own fingers, cutting the curls off his sister's doll's flaxen wig, and finally breaking his grandmother's spectacles,—that before his visitors arrived, indeed almost immediately after dinner, he contrived to get sent to bed in disgrace.

Poor Harry! There he lay sprawling, kicking, and roaring, whilst Susan, and William, and Lucy, were happily busy about the fine mellow Windsor pears; William up the tree gathering and shaking, Lucy and Susan catching them in their pinafores, and picking them up from the ground; now piling the rich fruit into

the great baskets that the thieves had left behind; and now, happy urchins, eating at discretion of the nicest and ripest: Frisk barking gaily amongst them as if he were eating Windsor pears too.

Poor Harry! He could hear all their glee and merriment through the open window as he lay in bed, and the storm of passion having subsided into a gentle rain of self-pity, there he

lay weeping and disconsolate, a grievous sob bursting forth every now and then as he heard the loud peal of childish laughter, and thought how he should have laughed, and how happy he should have been, and wondered whether his grandmother would so far relent as to let him get up to supper, and whether Lucy would be so good-natured as to bring him a pear. "It will be very ill-natured if she does not," thought Harry, and the poor boy's tears burst out anew. All on a sudden he heard a little foot on the stair, pit-a-pat, and thought she was coming. Pit-a-pat came the foot, nearer and nearer, and at last a small head peeped, half afraid, through the half-open door. But it was not Lucy's head; it was Frisk's—poor Frisk, whom Harry had been teasing all the morning, and who now came into the room wagging his tail, with a great pear in his mouth, jumped on the bed, and laid it in the little boy's hand.

NOTE.—They who are accustomed to dogs whose sagacity has been improved by domestication and good society, will not be surprised at the foregoing anecdote. Cowper's story of the water-lily is quite a case in point ; and a greyhound of my acquaintance, whose favourite playground was a large orchard, used regularly to bring the fallen apples to his mistress, was particularly anxious to get there after a windy night, and seemed to take singular pleasure in the amusement. This might be imitation ; but an exploit of my own lamented and beautiful Mayflower can hardly be traced to such an origin. Poor May, in common with most pet dogs, generally cared little for the persons whose duty it was to feed and attend upon her ; she seemed to know that it was their place, and received their services with calm and aristocratic civility, reserving all demonstrations of affection for her friends of the parlour. One of her attendants however, a lively, good-humoured boy called Tom, she honoured with a considerable share of her attention, liked his company, and, to the astonishment of the whole household, certainly liked him, a partiality which Tom returned with interest, combing and caressing her whenever opportunity offered. Master Tom was a celebrated player at marbles, and May was accustomed to stand at his side watching or seeming to watch the game. One afternoon she jumped over the half-hatch into the stable, evidently in search of her friend Tom—no Tom was there ; raced round the garden—still in vain ; peeped into the kitchen—Tom was as much to seek as ever : the maids who saw that she had some thing in her mouth, and were amused by her earnest searching

air, tried to detain her or to decoy her into the parlour, but without the slightest success. On she went from chaise-house to wood-house, from wood-house to coal-house, from coal-house to cart-house, until she caught a well-known sound from the knife-board, and, opening a door in the way, darted on the astonished Tom (whose fright at the apparition cost one of our best carving forks, which he broke in his surprise) and deposited in his hand a marble, which, as we afterwards found, she had picked up in the road, following up her present by a series of capers and gambols the most joyous and triumphant that can be imagined.

PRIDE SHALL HAVE A FALL.

"So you Aberleigh boys are about to play Sandleford," said George Leslie to Horace Lucas, "have you a good eleven?"

"Our players are pretty fair, I believe," replied Horace, "but the number is short. Both sides have agreed to take a mate or

two from other parishes, and I rode over to ask your cousin Charles and yourself to join our Aberleigh party."

"Faith! you are in luck, my good friend," cried George Leslie, "you may look upon the game as won. Charles, to be sure, is no great hand; can't bowl; hits up; and a bad field—a slow awkward field. But I—Did you never see me play? And I am so improved this season! I ought to be improved, for I have seen such play, and such players! I am just returned from my aunt's, who lives within a mile of Bramshill—Sir John's, you know—and there were all the great men of the day, all the Lord's men: Mr. Ward; and Mr. Budd—I'm thought to stand at my wicket very much like Mr. Budd; Saunders, who is reckoned, take him all in all, the best player in England; Saunders; and Broadbridge the Sussex bowler—I don't patronise their system though, I stick to the old steady, scientific game; Lord Frederick; and Mr. Knight—he's a fine figure of a man is Mr. Knight, the finest figure of any of them, and very great in the field; old Howard the bowler,—he's my model; and in short, almost every celebrated cricketer in England. I know that you Westminsters think that nobody can do anything so well as yourselves; but as far as cricket goes—ask Charles, he'll tell you that you are in luck to have me." And off the young gentleman strutted to pay his compliments to some ladies who were talking to his mother on the other side of the lawn; for this conversation took place on a fine day in July, under the heavy shadow of some tall elms, in Mrs. Leslie's beautiful grounds.

George's speech had been delivered in a high, solemn, vaunting tone, as grave as Don Quixote; but of the two who remained, Horace, a quick, arch, lively lad, laughed outright, and Charles, a mild, fair, delicate boy, could not help smiling.

"He gives himself a comfortable character, however," said Horace, "rather too good to be true; whilst of you he speaks modestly enough. Are you so bad, Charles? And is he such a paragon of cricketers? Does he bat like Mr. Budd, and field like Mr. Knight, and bowl like Howard?"

"Why, not exactly," was the reply; "but there's more truth than you think for. He's a good, but uncertain player; and I am a bad one, a very bad one; shy and timid and awkward; always feeling when the game is over that I could have done better; just as I have felt when a clever man, your father, for instance, has had the goodness to speak to me, how much better I ought to have talked. Somehow the power never comes at the right time at either game; so that I may say, as some people say of cucumbers, that I like cricket, but that cricket does not like me."

"Good or bad, my dear fellow, I'll take you," said Horace, "nervousness and all. It's a pity that you two cousins could not make over to one another some parcel of your several qualities; you would be much the happier for a dash of George's self-conceit, and he could spare enough to set up a whole regiment of dandies; whilst he would be all the better for your superfluous modesty. However, I'll take you both, right thankfully." And the arrangements were entered into forthwith.

They were to meet on the ground the ensuing morning to play the match; different engagements preventing the Leslies from practising with the Aberleigh side that evening, as Horace had wished and intended; for our friend Horace, ardent and keen in every thing, whether of sport or study, had set his heart on winning this match, and was very desirous of trying the powers of his new allies. Fifty times during the evening did he count over his own good players, and the good players of the other side, and gravely conclude, "It will all depend on the Leslies. How I wish to-morrow were come!" He said this so often that even his sister Emily, although the most indulgent person in the world, and very fond of her brother, grew so tired of hearing him that she could not help saying "I wish to-morrow were come too!"

And at last, as generally happens, whether we wish for it or not, to-morrow did come, as brilliant a to-morrow as ever was anticipated, even by a schoolboy in the holidays. The sun rose without a cloud; I speak from the best authority, for "scorning the scorner sleep" Horace was up before him: and the ball being twenty times weighed and the bats fifty times examined, he repaired, by half-past nine, to Sandleford Common, where the match was to be played, and the wickets pitched precisely at ten o'clock.

All parties were sufficiently punctual; and when the whole set had assembled, Horace found that, in spite of his calculations, a mistake had arisen in the amount of his forces; that reckoning himself there were ten Aberleigh boys on the ground, besides

the two foreign allies, proceeding, perhaps, from his over anxiety to collect recruits, whilst the Sandleford captain, on the contrary, had neglected to secure another mate as agreed on, and could only muster the original ten of his own parish, himself included.

In this dilemma the umpires immediately proposed to divide the auxiliaries, a suggestion to which George assented with his usual sang froid and Charles with his invariable good humour.

"You had better toss up for me," said the former. "For the choice," was Horace's civil amendment, and toss they did. "Heads!" cried he of Sandleford, and heads it was; and partly caught by the young gentleman's happy knack of puffing himself, partly by the knowing manner in which he was handling his bat, George was instantly claimed by the winner, and the game began.

Sandleford went in, and it was desired that the stranger and the best of the home party should take the precedence. But our great player coquetted. "It might put their side out of spirits if by any accident he were out early in the game; he had seen a match lost, by Mr. Budd or Saunders having their wickets knocked down sooner than was expected. He would wait." Accordingly it was not till the first four had gone down with only twenty notches gained that he at last went in, "to retrieve," as he said, "the fortune of the day."

Nothing could be more imposing than his appearance. There he stood at the wicket striking his bat against the ground with impatience, pawing the earth as it were, like a racehorse at the starting-post, or a greyhound in the slips, and friends and foes

admired and wondered. Even Horace Lucas felt the effect of the fine attitude and the brilliant animation, and delivered his ball less steadily than usual, anticipating that his opponent would get at least three runs. His fears were soon quieted. "By some accident" (to use the young gentleman's own phrase) Mr. George hit up; and that exceedingly bad field, his cousin Charles, caught him out without a notch.

This misadventure sadly disconcerted Sandleford as well as the unfortunate champion, and put Aberleigh in high spirits. Horace bowled better than ever; the fielding was excellent;

and the whole eleven were out for forty-seven notches—a wretched innings.

Aberleigh then went in; Horace, and at Horace's request, his ally Charles: George being one of the bowlers. But poor George (to borrow once more his own words) was "out of luck, thoroughly out of luck," for in spite of all his efforts the two mates got fifty-six before they parted, and the whole score was a hundred and nine.

Eighty-two ahead in the first innings! Small hopes for Sandleford, even though George went in immediately, "determined," as he said, "to conquer fortune." Small hopes for Sandleford!

"Come, Charles," said Horace Lucas, "let us see whether your bowling may not be as good as your batting. Just give your cousin one ball." And at the very first ball the stumps rattled, and the discomfited cricketer slunk away, amidst the crowing of his antagonists and the reproaches of his mates, so crestfallen, that even Horace was touched by his disconsolate countenance and humbled air. His tender-hearted cousin felt a still deeper sympathy, and almost lamented his own success.

"It is all luck, Sir," said he, in answer to a compliment from General Lucas, who stood talking to him after the match had been triumphantly won; "It is all luck! Poor George is a far better player than I am; he was so yesterday, and will be so to-morrow. This is merely the fortune of a day, a trifle not worth a word or a thought!"

"The object is trifling, I grant you, my good young friend," said the General, "and luck may have had some share in the victory; but I am much mistaken if your success and your cousin's mortification be not of essential benefit to both. It is one of the most salutary parts of the world's discipline, that modesty should triumph and that Pride should have a Fall."

THE TWO DOLLS.

A LUCKY day it was for little Fanny Elvington when her good aunt Delmont consented to receive her into her family, and sent for her from a fine old place, six miles from hence, Burdon Park, where she had been living with her maternal grandfather, to her own comfortable house in Brunswick Square. Poor Fanny had no natural home, her father, General Elvington, being in India

with his lady; and a worse residence than the Park could hardly be devised for a little girl, since Lady Burdon was dead, Sir Richard too sickly to be troubled with children, and the care of his grand-daughter left entirely to a vulgar old nurse and a superfine housekeeper. A lucky day for Fanny was that in which she exchanged their misrule for the wise and gentle government of her good aunt Delmont.

Fanny Elvington was a nice little girl, who had a great many good qualities, and, like other little girls, a few faults; which had grown up like weeds under the neglect and mismanagement of the people at the Park, and threatened to require both time and pains to eradicate. For instance, she had a great many foolish antipathies and troublesome fears, some caught from the affectation of the housekeeper, some from the ignorance of the nurse: she shrieked at the sight of a mouse, squalled at a frog, was well nigh ready to faint at an earwig, and quite as much afraid of a spider as if she had been a fly; she ran away from a quiet ox, as if he had been a mad bull, and had such a horror of chimney-sweepers that she shrank her head under the bedclothes whenever she heard the deep cry of "sweep! sweep!" forerunning the old clothesman and the milkman on a frosty morning, and could hardly be persuaded to look at them, poor creatures, dressed in their tawdry tinsel and dancing round Jack of the Green on Mayday. But her favourite fear, her pet aversion, was a negro; especially a little black footboy who lived next door, and whom she never saw without shrinking, and shuddering, and turning pale.

It was a most unlucky aversion for Fanny, and gave her and her aunt more trouble than all her other mislikings put together, inasmuch as Pompey came oftener in view than mouse or frog,

spider or earwig, ox or chimney-sweep. How it happened nobody could tell, but Pompey was always in Fanny Elvington's way. She saw him twice as often as any one else in the house. If she went to the window, he was sure to be standing on the

steps : if she walked in the Square garden, she met him crossing the pavement : she could not water her geraniums in the little court behind the house, but she heard his merry voice singing in broken English as he cleaned the knives and shoes on the other side of the wall ; nay, she could not even hang out her Canary-bird's cage at the back door, but he was sure to be feeding his parrot at theirs. Go where she would, Pompey's shining black face and broad white teeth followed her: he haunted her very dreams ; and the oftener she saw him, whether sleeping or waking, the more her unreasonable antipathy grew upon her. Her cousins laughed at her without effect, and her aunt's serious remonstrances were equally useless.

The person who, next to Fanny herself, suffered the most from this foolish and wicked prejudice, was poor Pompey, whose intelligence, activity, and good-humour had made him a constant favourite in his master's house, and who had sufficient sensibility to feel deeply the horror and disgust which he had inspired in his young neighbour. At first he tried to propitiate her by bringing groundsel and chickweed for her Canary-bird, running to meet her with an umbrella when she happened to be caught in the rain, and other small attentions, which were repelled with absolute loathing.

"Me same flesh and blood with you, missy, though skin be black," cried poor Pompey one day when pushed to extremity by Fanny's disdain, "same flesh and blood, missy!" a fact which the young lady denied with more than usual indignation ; she looked at her own white skin, and she thought of his black one ;

and all the reasoning of her aunt failed to convince her, that where the outside was so different, the inside could by possibility be alike. At last Mrs. Delmont was fain to leave the matter to the great curer of all prejudices, called Time, who in this case seemed even slower in his operations than usual.

In the mean while, Fanny's birthday approached, and as it was within a few days of that of her cousin, Emma Delmont, it was agreed to celebrate the two festivals together. Double feasting! double holiday! double presents! never was a gayer anniversary. Mrs. Delmont's own gifts had been reserved to the conclusion of the jollity, and after the fruit was put on the table, two huge dolls, almost as big as real babies, were introduced to the little company. They excited and deserved universal admiration. The first was a young lady of the most delicate construction and the most elaborate ornament; a doll of the highest fashion, with sleeves like a bishop, a waist like a wasp, a magnificent bustle, and petticoats so full and so puffed out round the bottom, that the question of hoop or no hoop was stoutly debated between two of the elder girls. Her cheeks were very red, and her neck very white, and her ringlets in the newest possible taste. In short, she was so completely *à la mode* that a Parisian milliner might have sent her as a pattern to her fellow tradeswoman in London, or the London milliner might have returned the compliment to her sister artist over the water. Her glories, however, were fated to be eclipsed. The moment that the second doll made its appearance, the lady of fashion was looked at no longer.

The second doll was a young gentleman, habited in the striped and braided costume which is the ordinary transition dress of boys between leaving off petticoats and assuming the doublet

and hose. It was so exactly like Willy Delmont's own attire, that the astonished boy looked at himself, to be sure that the doll had not stolen the clothes off his back. The apparel, how-

ever, was not the charm that fixed the attention of the young people; the attraction was the complexion, which was of as deep and shining a black, as perfect an imitation of a negro, in tint and feature, as female ingenuity could accomplish. The face, neck, arms, and legs were all covered with black silk; and much skill was shown in shaping and sewing on the broad flat nose, large ears, and pouting lips, whilst the great white teeth and bright round eyes relieved the monotony of the colour. The wig was of black worsted, knitted, and then unravelled, as natural as if it had actually grown on the head. Perhaps the novelty (for none of the party had seen a black doll before) might increase the effect, but they all declared that they had never seen so accurate an imitation, so perfect an illusion. Even Fanny, who at first sight had almost taken the doll for her old enemy Pompey in little, and had shrunk back accordingly, began at last to catch some of the curiosity (for curiosity is a catching passion that characterised her companions. She drew near—she gazed—at last she even touched the doll, and listened with some interest to Mrs. Delmont's detail of the trouble she found in constructing the young lady and gentleman.

"What are they made of, aunt?"

"Rags, my dear!" was the reply: "nothing but rags," continued Mrs. Delmont, unripping a little of the black gentleman's foot and the white lady's arm, and showing the linen of

which they were composed;—"both alike, Fanny," pursued her good aunt, "both the same colour underneath the skin, and both the work of the same hand—like Pompey and you," added she more solemnly; "and now choose which doll you will."

And Fanny, blushing and hesitating, chose the black one; and the next day her aunt had the pleasure to see her show it to Pompey over the wall, to his infinite delight; and, in a very few days, Mrs. Delmont had the still greater pleasure to find that Fanny Elvington had not only overcome and acknowledged

her prejudice, but had given Pompey a new half-crown, and had accepted groundsel for her Canary-bird from the poor negro boy.

NOTE.—About a month after sitting to me for his portrait, the young black gentleman whom I have endeavoured to describe, (I do not mean Pompey, but the doll,) set out upon his travels. He had been constructed in this little Berkshire of ours for some children in the great county of York, and a friend of mine, travelling northward, had the goodness to offer him a place in her carriage for the journey. My friend was a married woman, accompanied by her husband and another lady, and finding the doll cumbersome to pack, wrapped it in a large

shawl, and carried it in her lap baby fashion. At the first inn where they stopped to dine, she handed it carelessly out of the carriage before alighting, and was much amused to see it received with the grave officious tenderness usually shown to a real infant by the nicely dressed hostess, whose consternation, when, still taking it for a living child, she caught a glimpse of the complexion, is said to have been irresistibly ludicrous. Of course my friend did not undeceive her. Indeed I believe she humoured the mistake wherever it occurred all along the north road, to the unspeakable astonishment and mystification of chambermaids and waiters.

THE FOSTER-MOTHER.

"PRAY how do you like your new schoolfellow, Sir Arthur Vere?" said Mr. Stanley to his young son Charles, as they were sauntering rather than walking in the noble park which surrounds his fine old seat of Stanley Manor, on a bright April morning; "his grandmother speaks of him as a lad of high promise."

"Of high promise, does she, sir? Whew!" quoth Master Charles, whistling to a large spaniel, and beating the sedges

round a fine piece of water, by the edge of which they stood. "A lad of promise! Whew! Heigh, Dash! Heigh! One may be sure there are teal or wild ducks here by Dash's action. Heigh, Dash! Heigh!" continued Master Stanley. "And so his grandmamma speaks of Vere as a lad of promise? Whew, Dash! There's a fine fellow!"

Now Master Charles Stanley was a boy still under eleven; but being clever, bold, and spirited, an old denizen of a public school, and encouraged to talk freely at home, he spoke with a decision and freedom not very usual at his age, thus exhibiting to his excellent father, and by exhibiting enabling him to correct, the rash judgments of inexperience, and the petulant decisions of a presumptuous though generous character. In the present instance, Mr. Stanley was a good deal amused by the manner in which his son had contrived to intimate his dissent from the opinion of the good old Lady Vere, and when Charles repeated "a lad of high promise, indeed! Whew, Dash! Whew!" he replied at once to his insinuation, "And why not a boy of promise, Charles?"

"Because, sir, he's so much more like a girl. You never saw such a mincing, blushing, delicate personage as it is in all your life; afraid of getting wet in the feet lest he should catch cold, or of going without his hat lest he should spoil his complexion. He wraps half-a-dozen silk handkerchiefs about his neck because he is subject to sore throats; wears kid gloves at cricket for fear his hands should chap; and wraps up his feet in woollen socks because he once had a chilblain. A promising boy, indeed!

Why, sir, his grandmother herself could not be a greater coddle in her own venerable person, than this precious sprig of the baronetage, Sir Francis Vere."

Mr. Stanley smiled, in spite of himself. "*You'll* come to kid gloves some time or other, Master Charles; for, as rough and red as those paws of yours are now, one may trust to the instinct of eighteen for that foppery. But eleven is rather early."

"Besides, sir," continued Charles, "he sports a dressing-box as large as my trunk, full of almond paste, and violet soap, and eau de Cologne, and oil for the air, and all manner of essences, so that one may smell him half a mile off; and his cambric handkerchief was tossed out of the school only last week by Dr. K., because it half poisoned him by stinking of otto of roses. I hope I shall never come to that, sir, even if I do turn out a coxcomb at eighteen."

"There is no telling, Charles," replied his father. "I think you a very promising subject for any folly that may happen at that time to be the fashion. But this poor boy! What a life he must lead amongst you! And how entirely he owes his effeminacy to the accident of his being brought up amongst females!"

"I think not, sir, it is the nature of the creature. If you were to see him you would say so. All the grandmothers in the world would never make a manly lad such a milk-sop." And Charles looked at himself as he stood struttingly flourishing a switch in one hand, and caressing Dash—who, dripping with mud from the bank, was splashing him most manfully from top

to toe—with the other, he looked as if he would fain have said, "all the grandmothers in the world would never have made a milk-sop of me."

Apparently Mr. Stanley read his son's thoughts. "Ah, Charles! you know little of the effect of education, of habit, of constant association. You yourself, if exposed to similar circumstances, would have been just as likely to turn out a missy young gentleman as this poor child, Sir Arthur Vere—his very title will make against him. But talking of the power of association, come and sit down on this bank, and let Dash return to his dear sport of beating for wild fowl, and be quiet, if you can, for five minutes, whilst I tell you a story."

Now Master Charles did not very thoroughly relish this invitation. It seemed to him hardly manly to sit down for the purpose of listening to a story which, he suspected, was to be told to him for the sake of the moral; he obeyed, nevertheless, flumping himself down in the midst of a tuft of cowslips, whilst Dash, with equal comprehension and far more alacrity, returned to his search for the wild-duck's nest, the existence of which had become clear to his sagacity amongst the sedges and sallows on the water's edge.

"Nay, it is not much of a story either," said Mr. Stanley, when both were comfortably established on their soft and fragrant seat. "Not much that deserves the name of a story, though a curious fact in natural history. Do you remember

admiring Dr. Lyndsay's pretty little spaniel yesterday, and wondering at its name?"*

"Romulus? Yes, sir, I do not know which I admired most, the venerable master, with his fine upright person and keen bright eye, his white bushy wig and three-cornered hat, and clerical coat, walking so alertly and speaking so kindly, and yet with something stately about him too, or the pretty little delicate creature, so white and shining, that followed him—rather too much like a lady's pet to be sure—but the little dog and the master matched each other well, both seemed courtly and dignified, a sort of people whose company did one honour."

"The master's company would do honour to any court in Europe, Charles. You are right there. He is one of the most learned and eminent persons in England, and as remarkable for his high qualities as for his vast attainments. But it is with Romulus that we have to do at present. Romulus's

* Odd names in dogs are by no means uncommon. I saw a lady's lap-dog yesterday who was called Spes, and the little creature being a gentleman, there was no translating the name and calling it by the more euphonious appellation of Hope—for Hope is feminine, and feminine must be, as witness Collin's ode, Lawrence's picture, Miss Sedgwick's novel of Hope Leslie, and the thousand and one seals, where she flourishes leaning elegantly against her anchor. Of course we challenged his fair and charming mistress (for most fair and most charming she is) as to the donor of her pretty pet, since to give the name of Hope to the approved emblem of Fidelity, did look rather lover-like. But the little creature had been a present from her brother, and so called in compliance with his desire—a mere classical whim, containing no allusion whatsoever.

mother belonged to your kind friend Colonel Bruce, the gay, gallant, handsome sportsman, whose manliness and gentlemanliness you admire so much. She was a beautiful little spaniel,

of the Marlborough breed, excellent as a sporting dog, and a great pet with her master. She had just been confined with Romulus and another pup, and was very literally in the straw;

when one fine morning, in September, Colonel Bruce sallied forth with his gun and his pointers, partridge shooting, little suspecting that his poor pet, whose attention had unluckily been caught by the gun and the leathern gaiters, had left her puppies to follow him to the field. The pointers were ranging the stubble, when Colonel Bruce heard a rustling in the hedge-row close by; he saw nothing, but taking for granted that it was a hare, fired, and killed his little favourite dead upon the spot."

"Oh, papa! Poor Colonel Bruce! What a sad accident! How shocked he must have been!"

"Shocked enough, Charles. Even now he says he can scarcely bear to think of it. The poor little creature, when he discovered her amongst the long grass and reeds, uttered one faint moan, looked up in his face fondly and piteously, tried to lick his hand, then gave one shiver, stretched out her delicate feet, and died. She, however, was dead. But the puppies! What was to become of them? Only three days old, and smaller than rats!"

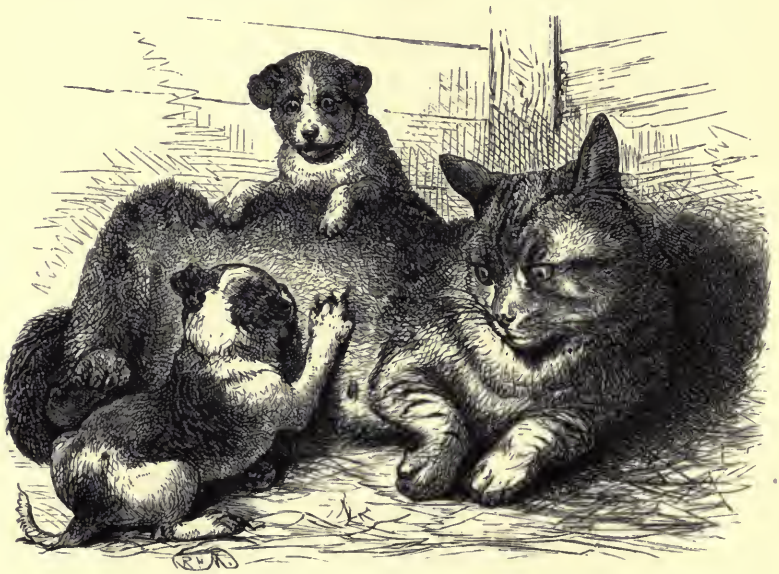
"What did become of them, father?"

"Why, luckily, Mrs. Bruce had a favourite cat, whose kittens had just been taken from her. The pups were put to pussy, who took to them as if they had been her own offspring, and brought them up with all imaginable care and success."

"Well, sir, now I find the reason of the name.—Well?"

"Romulus you have seen. He is rather smaller, perhaps

than he might have been if nursed by his own mother, but that, in a Marlborough spaniel, is a merit; and Remus (for so, of course, the brother twin was called) is smaller still. Their foster-mother did them all possible justice; and was fonder of them, and nourished them longer than she had ever been known to do by her own kittens. But the extraordinary part



of the story is, that with the cat's milk these little doglings imbibed also the cat's habits; would sit and wash their faces with their paws, were excellent mousers, and would watch a rat-hole for an hour."

"Oh, papa!"

"Fact, I assure you, Charles. The celebrated cat, who was turned into a lady at the prayer of her master, never caught a mouse in better style than Romulus, who, moreover, would no more wet his feet than his purring foster-mother, or Sir Arthur Vere."

"Oh, father!"

"It's the simple truth, I assure you, Charles; and proceeds, in both instances, from the same cause, example and education; and the self-same story, which throws some light on the origin of that poor boy's effeminacy, may also afford good hope of his reformation; for whilst Romulus, under the tender care of Dr. Lyndsay, which (no offence to him) may in this instance be compared to the tutelage of Lady Vere, continues to pursue and practise all his cattish propensities and habits, Remus, turned into Colonel Bruce's kennel, which (no offence to that repository of doggish learning) may be not unaptly likened to the riotous seminary, yclept a public school, has recovered all his canine hardihood and accomplishments, is famous in covert and hedge-row, as good a water dog as Dash himself, and as little likely to notice a mouse, or wash his face with his paws, as that sagacious quadruped. And now, Charles, may we not have hopes of Sir Arthur?"

And Charles assented—and so it proved. Before two years had elapsed, young Vere, stimulated by ridicule, had flung aside his kid gloves, his woollen socks, his perfumery, and his foppery, had overcome his horror of wet feet and chapped

hands, and had become the best rower, and the second best cricketer of his form.

N.B.—The canine part of my little story is literally true. Romulus is still living, and the property of no less a person than the venerable P——, of M—— College, the learned and excellent Dr. R——.

YOUNG MASTER BEN.

It was about seven o'clock one evening in the Christmas week, that I was sitting alone in our little parlour, with my feet on the fender, my dog Dash reclining against my knee, (I beg Dash's pardon for having reckoned him as nobody,) a glowing fire before me, and an apple roasting on the hob,—doing nothing, unless occasionally turning the apple or patting Dash's

beautiful head may be accounted doings,—and entirely immersed in that perfection of lazy comfort—that piece of dreamy delight yclept a reverie.

There was, too, that additional zest to the enjoyment of indoor warmth and comfort, which is derived from the effect of strong contrast without. The weather was what is usually and most expressively termed—bitter. Snow lay deep on the ground, and the dark cloudy sky gave token that the first interval of calm would produce another fall. At the moment of which I speak, the wind was too high even for a snowstorm ; the fierce north-east howled amain, and the icy bushes in the hedge-rows rattled and crackled in the tempest, whilst the large boughs of the trees creaked like the masts of a ship at sea. It is strange that these noises, betokening so much misery to the poor wretches doomed to wander abroad, should add to the sense of snugness and security at home ;—but so it is ! The selfishness, however unamiable, is too general to be ashamed of, or even to lament over ; and, perhaps, a silent thankfulness for one's own superior comforts may tend to throw into the feeling that portion of good which will generally be found in the inward meditations of every human being not absolutely wicked ; for the thoughts of an hour, as well as the actions of a life, are of mingled yarn ; none, I fear, all virtuous,—few, I trust, utterly wicked.

My enjoyment of that blessed state the "far' niente" was, however, much too dreamy and vague to permit me to analyse my own sensations. And yet my reverie was not wholly

pleasurable either. We lived in the midst of the disturbed districts; my father was at B., attending his duty (a very painful one on this occasion) as chairman of the bench; and though I had every reason to believe that the evil spirit was subsiding, and that he was at that instant sitting, as quietly and as snugly as myself, with his friend the high sheriff and his brother magistrates in a warm, comfortable, elegant room at the Crown Inn, (for happen what may, justices must dine!) or at the worst, seated by a large fire taking examinations in the council chamber at B., still no one who lived within reach of the armed peasantry, or of the exaggerated and still more frightful rumours that preceded their approach, or who had witnessed, as I had done, the terrific blaze of the almost nightly conflagrations, could get rid of the vague idea of danger which might arrive at any moment, especially to one notoriously and actively engaged in putting down the mischief. Our parish had remained, it is true, happily free from the contagion; still it raged all around, east, west, north, and south; we were on a well-frequented highway, almost at the very point where four roads met, and the mobs travelled so far and so fast, that there was no telling at what hour or from what point of the compass our quiet village might be invaded.

Just as thoughts like these were beginning to traverse the blissful thoughtfulness of my reverie, a noise of shouting voices and rushing feet from the end of the street struck my ear. Dash started up instantly, and I was preparing to ring the bell and to be frightened, when a sound, well known to each of us,

pacified us both. Dash, who is a superb old English spaniel, gave his magnificent ears a mighty shake; and making his accustomed three turns on the hearth-rug, lay down before the fire; and I, with a strangely modified feeling, alarm subsiding into amazed curiosity, proceeded to the door to examine into the cause of the uproar.

The sound which produced this consolatory effect was the well-known and peculiar whistle of Master Ben Emery,—a sound which, while it gave token of every variety of boyish mischief, was yet a most comfortable assurance against any thing worse.

Young Master Ben was one of those truly English personages, who, even in boyhood, show token of the character that

is to be—a humourist in embryo, an oddity, a wag. His father was a better sort of labourer, a kind of bailiff or upper man in the service of a neighbouring farmer, and had brought up a large family honestly and creditably. All of these were now happily out of the way,—some at service, some in business, some married and some dead,—with the exception of Benjamin, the youngest born, his mother's darling and plague. Ben

was not, as a mother's darling often is—a beauty. His carrotty locks forbade any claim to that title, though he had the lively blue eye and pleasant smile which so often accompany that complexion, and cause a general resemblance, a kind of family likeness, between red-haired people. In person he was a thin, stunted, dwarfish boy of fourteen, small and light enough to pass for ten, who made use of his actual age to evade a longer

attendance at the charity school, the master of which, a dull personage no way fit to cope with Ben's biting jests, acquiescing in the young gentleman's own account of his scholarship purely to get rid of him ; whilst his smallness of size and look of youth and debility he turned to account in another way, pleading his deficiency in bulk and stature and general weakness and delicacy as a reason for not going to work at the farm with his father, whose master had consented to employ him to drive the team. He weakly! Why in play or in mischief he was a pocket Hercules! has beaten big Bob the blacksmith at quoits; and thrown Titus Penwyn, the Cornish boy, in wrestling, Delicate! why if the sun or the world would but have stood still for the time, there is no doubt but he could have played at cricket for eight-and-forty hours running, without requiring more pause than the usual fifteen minutes between the innings. No exercise that bore the name of sport was too much for him ; sheer labour was another matter.

Not only did he plead weakness and delicacy to escape the promotion of plough-boy at farmer Brookes's, but when hired by his father to keep Master Simmons's sheep,—an employment that seemed made for him, inasmuch as there was for ten hours in the day nothing to do but to lie on a bank and practise a certain pastoral flageolet with which he used to go too-tooing through the village,—he contrived to get dismissed in three days for incapacity and contumacy; and even when proffered by his mother to look after her crony dame Welles's Welsh cow, an animal famous for getting out of bounds, not

for the lucre of gain, but simply, as she expressed it, to keep both the creatures out of mischief, his services were rejected by the prudent dame with the observation, that obstropulous and wild as her beast might be, Ben was incomparably the most unmanageable of the two—a proof of bad reputation

which so enraged his father, that he only escaped a sound flogging by climbing up a tree like a squirrel, and sleeping all night in the coppice amidst the fern and the bushes.

It was the very day after this misadventure, that Ben contrived to attach himself to our little establishment as a sort of help to our boy John. How he managed nobody can tell, for

all the house knew him and his character, and every body in it held him for the very incarnation of mischief; but here he is, in prime favour with every one, not regularly paid and hired to be sure, but receiving sufficient and comfortable wages in the shape of pretty constant dinners and suppers, frequent largesses of sixpences and shillings, and occasional doles of wearing apparel. I question whether he be not more expensive to our small household than that model of a boy John, himself. Having said this, it is but right to add that he is nearly as useful in his own wild way; will do any thing on earth that he thinks can serve or please, especially if he be not ordered to do it (for he has a Sir-John-Falstaff-like aversion to compulsion); makes himself in one way or other agreeable to the whole family—always excepting a certain under-maid called Betsy, against whom he has a spite; and although renowned all over the parish for story-telling, a peccadillo which I really believe he cannot help, never takes any of us in, (for we know him so well that we never dream of believing him,) unless now and then when he happens to speak truth, which has the same effect in deceiving his hearers as falsehood from other people.

We keep Ben because we like him. Why he came to us, heaven knows! Perhaps for the same reason; perhaps to avoid the flogging which roosting in the coppice had delayed, but not averted; perhaps attracted by a clever jay of mine, now, alas! no more—a bird of great accomplishment, and almost as saucy as himself; perhaps for the chance of handling a certain gun which he had seen John cleaning, an implement of noise and

mischief that just suits his fancy, and which he brandishes of a night about the garden, pretending to hear thieves ; perhaps to ride a fine young horse of ours which nobody else can ride, for he is an excellent horseman, and with his quick wit and light weight, seems born for a jockey ; perhaps, and this is the likeliest cause of all, to have opportunity for playing tricks on poor

Betsy, whom neither I nor my maid Anne, and I believe she tries all in her power, can protect from his elvish machinations. But that very day had he spoilt my dinner (most unintentionally as far as his design went) by throwing a snow-ball at her as she stood by the kitchen fire, which from her suddenly starting aside to avoid the missile, alighted on the back of a fowl in the act of being roasted, which was thereby rendered

totally uneatable. This feat had, of course, brought him into great disgrace in the lower regions; and since half-past five, when the misadventure took place, nothing had been seen or heard of the young gentleman till now that his repeated and well-known whistle gave token of his vicinity.

Immediately after Ben's whistle, another sound was heard in the mêlée rising amidst the tramp of feet bounding along the frosty path from which the snow had been swept, the shouts and cries of children escaping and pursued, and the distant tinkling of a bell,—another well-known sound, the loud, gruff, angry voice of Master Clarke, the parish beadle.

This worthy functionary was a person who, an enemy to mischievous boys, by virtue of his office, had contrived to render his post and his person peculiarly obnoxious to that small rabble of the village, of whom Ben might be considered the ringleader, by a sour stern severity of aspect and character, an unrelenting aversion to frolic or pastime of any sort, and an alacrity in pursuing and punishing the unhappy culprits, which came in strong contrast with his usual stolid slowness of act and word. Of course, Master Clarke could not fail to be unpopular; and the mingled noises of his voice and of the bell reminded me that that very morning he had been to our house to inform his Worship that every night, as soon as he sat down to supper, his shop-bell had been rung and rung and rung, not by profitable customers, but by some invisible enemies, boys of course, whom he was determined to catch, if catch he could, and to punish with all the severity of his

rod of office. His Worship, an indulgent and kindly personage, heard his complaints, and smiled and shook his head, and even threw away upon him a little of that unprofitable commodity called good advice;—"Boys will be boys, Master Clarke," said he; "you were one once, and so was I. Better leave the bell unanswered for a night or two; take no notice, and depend on it they'll soon tire of their frolic."

This recollection, which came across me as I passed from the door of the parlour to the door of the hall, completely enlightened me as to the cause of the uproar; and I was prepared to see, by the pale cold dim snow-light, Master Clarke, with a screaming, struggling urchin in either hand, (little Dick Wilson, poor fellow! who had but just donned the doublet and hose, and Sam Sewell, who is still in petticoats,) in full chase of the larger fry who were flying before his fury, whilst Master Ben was lying perdu in a corner of our court under shadow of the wall which he had contrived to leap or to scramble over. The sound of the distant ringing seemed to augment with every stride that Master Clarke took, who, half maddened with that noise, and with a sudden whistle which Ben again sent forth from his hiding-place under the wall, suddenly abandoned his pursuit, and was making for our gate, when all at once the man—one of the largest proportions, colossal, gigantic!—seemed pulled back with a mighty jerk by some invisible cause, and was laid prostrate and sprawling in the snowy kennel. Ben jumped on the wall, the better to survey and laugh at him, as Puck might have done at Bottom, and the rest of the crew dancing with shouts of triumph round their fallen enemy, like the make-believe fairies round Falstaff in the guise of Herne the Hunter. The cause of this downfall was soon discovered to be a strong cord tied at one end to Master Clarke's coat, at the other to the bell at his shop door—but how fastened, or by whom, this deponent saith not. Betsy, indeed, avers that the cord much resembles one which

she herself missed that very evening from John and Ben's bedstead; and the beadle hath his own suspicions; but as no certain proof could be obtained, Master Ben hath escaped scot-free.

PATTY'S NEW HAT.

WANDERING about the meadows one morning last May, absorbed in the pastoral beauty of the season and the scenery, I was overtaken by a heavy shower just as I passed old Mrs. Matthew's great farmhouse, and forced to run for shelter to her hospitable porch. A pleasant shelter in good truth I found there. The green pastures dotted with fine old trees stretching all around; the clear brook winding about them turning and returning on its

course, as if loath to depart; the rude cart-track leading through the ford; the neater pathway with its foot-bridge; the village spire rising amongst a cluster of cottages, all but the roofs and chimneys concealed by a grove of oaks; the woody back-ground and the blue hills in the distance, all so flowery and bowery in the pleasant month of May; the nightingales singing; the bells ringing; and the porch itself, around which a honeysuckle in full bloom was wreathing its sweet flowers, giving out such an odour in the rain, as in dry weather nothing but the twilight will bring forth—an atmosphere of fragrance. The whole porch was alive and musical with bees, who, happy rogues, instead of being routed by the wet, only folded their wings the closer, and dived the deeper into the honey-tubes, enjoying, as it seemed, so good an excuse for creeping still farther within their flowery lodgment. It is hard to say which enjoyed the sweet breath of the shower and the honeysuckle most, the bees or I; but the rain began to drive so fast, that at the end of five minutes I was not sorry to be discovered by a little girl belonging to the family; and, first, ushered into the spacious kitchen, with its heavy oak table, its curtained chimney corner, its bacon rack loaded with enormous flitches, and its ample dresser, glittering with crockery ware; and, finally, conducted by Mrs. Matthews herself into her own comfortable parlour, and snugly settled there with herself and her eldest grand-daughter, a woman grown; whilst the younger sister, a smiling light-footed lass of eleven or there-abouts, tripped off to find a boy to convey a message to my family, requesting them to send for me, the

rain being now too decided to admit of any prospect of my walking home.

The sort of bustle which my reception had caused having subsided, I found great amusement in watching my hospitable hostess, and listening to a dialogue, if so it may be called, between her pretty grand-daughter and herself, which at once let me into a little love secret, and gave me an opportunity of observing one, of whose occasional oddities I had all my life heard a great deal.

Mrs. Matthews was one of the most remarkable persons in these parts; a capital farmer, a most intelligent parish officer, and in her domestic government not a little resembling one of the finest sketches which Mr. Crabbe's graphical pen ever produced.

> "Next died the widow Goe, an active dame
> Famed ten miles round and worthy all her fame;
> She lost her husband when their loves were young,
> But kept her farm, her credit, and her tongue:
> Full thirty years she ruled with matchless skill,
> With guiding judgment and resistless will;
> Advice she scorned, rebellions she suppressed,
> And sons and servants bowed at her behest.
> No parish business in the place could stir
> Without direction or assent from her;
> In turn she took each office as it fell,
> Knew all their duties and discharged them well.
> She matched both sons and daughters to her mind,
> And lent them eyes, for love she heard was blind."
>
> *Parish Register.*

Great power of body and mind was visible in her robust person and massive countenance; and there was both humour and intelligence in her acute smile, and in the keen grey eye that glanced from under her spectacles. All that she said bore the stamp of sense; but at this time she was in no talking mood, and on my begging that I might cause no interruption, resumed her seat and her labours in silent composure. She sat at a little

table mending a fustian jacket belonging to one of her sons—a sort of masculine job which suited her much better than a more delicate piece of sempstress-ship would probably have done; indeed the tailors' needle, which she brandished with great skill, the whity-brown thread tied round her neck, and the huge dull-looking *shears* (one can't make up one's mind to call such a machine scissors), which in company with an enormous pincushion dangled from her apron-string, figuring as the pendant to a most formidable bunch of keys, formed altogether such a working apparatus as shall hardly be matched in these days of polished cutlery and cobwebby cotton-thread.

On the other side of the little table sat her pretty granddaughter Patty, a black-eyed young woman, with a bright complexion, a neat trim figure, and a general air of gentility considerably above her station. She was trimming a very smart straw hat with pink ribbons; trimming and untrimming, for the bows were tied and untied, taken off and put on, and taken off again, with a look of impatience and discontent, not common to a damsel of seventeen when contemplating a new piece of finery. The poor little lass was evidently out of sorts. She sighed, and quirked, and fidgeted, and seemed ready to cry; whilst her grandmother just glanced at her from under her spectacles, pursed up her mouth, and contrived with some difficulty not to laugh. At last Patty spoke.

"Now, grandmother, you will let me go to Chapel Row revel this afternoon, won't you?"

"Humph," said Mrs. Matthews.

"It hardly rains at all, grandmother!"

"Humph!" again said Mrs. Matthews, opening the prodigious scissors with which she was amputating, so to say, a button, and directing the rounded end significantly to my wet shawl, whilst the sharp point was reverted towards the dripping honeysuckle. "Humph!"

"There's no dirt to signify!"

Another "Humph!" and another point to the draggled tail of my white gown.

"At all events, it's going to clear."

Two "Humphs!" and two points, one to the clouds, and one to the barometer.

"It's only seven miles," said Patty; "and if the horses are wanted, I can walk."

"Humph!" quoth Mrs. Matthews.

"My aunt Ellis will be there, and my cousin Mary."

"Humph!" again said Mrs. Matthews.

"And if a person is coming here on business, what can I be wanted for when you are at home, grandmother?"

"Humph!" once again was the answer.

"What business can any one have with me?"

Another "Humph!"

"My cousin Mary will be so disappointed!"

"Humph!"

"And I half promised my cousin William—poor William!"

"Humph!" again.

"Poor William! Oh, grandmother, do let me go! And I've got my new hat and all—just such a hat as William likes! Poor William! You will let me go, grandmother?"

And receiving no answer but a very unequivocal "Humph!" poor Patty threw down her straw hat, fetched a deep sigh, and sate in a most disconsolate attitude, snipping her pink ribbon to pieces; Mrs. Matthews went on manfully with her "stitchery;" and for ten minutes there was a dead pause. It was at length broken by my little friend and introducer, Susan, who was standing at the window, and exclaimed—"Who is this riding up the meadow all through the rain? Look!—see!—I do think—no, it can't be—yes, it is—it is certainly my cousin William Ellis! Look, grandmother!"

"Humph!" said Mrs. Matthews.

"What can cousin William be coming for?" continued Susan.

"Humph!" quoth Mrs. Matthews.

"Oh, I know!—I know!" screamed Susan, clapping her hands and jumping for joy as she saw the changed expression of Patty's countenance,—the beaming delight, succeeded by a pretty downcast shamefacedness, as she turned away from her grandmother's arch smile and archer nod. "I know!—I know!" shouted Susan.

"Humph!" said Mrs. Matthews.

"For shame, Susan! Pray don't, grandmother!" said Patty, imploringly.

"For shame! Why I did not say he was coming to court Patty! Did I, grandmother?" returned Susan.

"And I take this good lady to witness," replied Mrs. Matthews, as Patty, gathering up her hat and her scraps of ribbon, prepared to make her escape—"I take you all to witness that I have said nothing of any sort. Get along with you, Patty!" added she, "you have spoiled your pink trimming; but I think you are likely to want white ribbons next, and, if you put me in mind, I'll buy them for you!" And smiling in spite of herself, the happy girl ran out of the room.

GOING TO THE RACES.

A MEMORABLE day was the third of last June to Mary and Henrietta Coxe, the young daughters of Simon Coxe, the carpenter of Aberleigh, for it was the first day of Ascot Races, and the first time of their going to that celebrated union of sport and fashion. There is no pleasure so great in the eyes of our

country damsels as a jaunt to Ascot. In the first place, it is, when you get there, a genuine English amusement, open alike to rich and poor, elegant as an opera, and merry as a fair ; in the second, this village of Aberleigh is situate about fourteen miles from the course, just within distance, almost out of distance, so that there is commonly enough of suspense and difficulty, the slight difficulty, the short suspense, which add such zest to pleasure ; finally, at Ascot you are sure to see the king, to see him in his graciousness and his dignity, the finest gentleman in Europe, the greatest sovereign of the world. Truly it is nothing extraordinary that his liege subjects should flock to indulge their feelings of loyalty by the sight of such a monarch, and that the announcement of his presence should cover a barren heath with a dense and crowded population of all ranks and all ages, from the duchess to the gipsy, from the old man of eighty to the child in its mother's arms.

All people love Ascot Races ; but our country lasses love them above all. It is their favourite wedding jaunt, for half our young couples are married in the race week, and one or two matches have seemed to me got up purposely for the occasion ; and of all the attentions that can be offered by a lover, a drive to the Races is the most irresistible. In short, so congenial is that gay scene to love, that it is a moot point which are most numerous, the courtships that conclude there in the shape of bridal excursions, or those which begin on that favoured spot in the shape of parties of pleasure ; and the delicate experiment called "popping the question," is so often put in practice on

the very course itself, that when Robert Hewitt, the young farmer at the Holt, asked Master Coxe's permission to escort his daughters, not only the good carpenter, but his neighbours the blacksmith and the shoemaker looked on this mark of rustic gallantry as the precursor of a declaration in form; and all the village cried out on Hetta Coxe's extreme good luck, Hetta being supposed, and with some reason, to be the chief object of this attention.

Robert Hewitt was a young farmer of the old school, honest, frugal, and industrious; thrifty, thriving, and likely to thrive, one of a fine yeomanly spirit, not ashamed of his station, and fond of following the habits of his forefathers, sowing his own corn, driving his own team, and occasionally ploughing his own land. As proud, perhaps, of his blunt speech and homely ways as some of his brother farmers of their superior refinement and gentility. Nothing could exceed the scorn with which Robert Hewitt, in his market cart, drawn by his good horse Dobbin, would look down on one neighbour on his hunter, and another in his gig. To the full as proud as any of them was Robert, but in a different way, and perhaps a safer. He piqued himself, like a good Englishman, on wearing a smock frock, smoking his pipe, and hating foreigners, to our intercourse with whom he was wont to ascribe all the airs and graces, the new fashions, and the effeminacy, which annoyed him in his own countrymen. He hated the French, he detested dandies, and he abhorred fine ladies, fine ways, and finery of any sort. Such was Robert Hewitt.

Henrietta Coxe was a pretty girl of seventeen, and had passed the greater part of her life with an aunt in the next town, who had been a lady's maid in her youth, and had retired thither on a small annuity. To this aunt, who had been dead about a twelvemonth, she was indebted for a name, rather

too fine for common wear—I believe she wrote herself Henrietta-Matilda; a large wardrobe, pretty much in the same predicament; an abundant stock of superfine notions, some skill in mantua-making and millinery, and a legacy of a hundred pounds to be paid on her wedding-day. Her beauty was quite in the style of a wax doll: blue eyes, flaxen hair, delicate features, and a pink and white complexion, much resembling that sweet pea which is known by the name of the painted lady. Very pretty she was certainly, with all her airs and

graces; and very pretty, in spite of her airs and graces, did Robert Hewitt think her; and love, who delights in contrasts and has an especial pleasure in oversetting wise resolutions and bending the haughty self-will of the lords of the creation, was beginning to make strange havoc in the stout yeoman's heart. His operations, too, found a very unintentional coadjutrix in old Mrs. Hewitt, who, taking alarm at her son's frequent visits to the carpenter's shop, unwarily expressed a hope that if her son did intend to marry one of the Coxes, he would have nothing to do with the fine lady, but would choose Mary, the elder sister, a dark-haired, pleasant-looking young woman of two-and-twenty, who kept the house as clean as a palace, and was the boast of the village for industry and good humour. Now this unlucky caution gave Robert, who loved his mother, but did not choose to be managed by her, an additional motive for his lurking preference, by piquing his self-will; add to which, the little damsel herself, in the absence of other admirers, took visible pleasure in his admiration; so that affairs seemed drawing to a crisis, and the party to Ascot appeared likely to end like other jaunts to the same place, in a wedding. It is true that the invitation, which had been readily and gratefully accepted by her sister, had been received by Miss Hetta with some little demur. "Going to the Races was delightful; but to ride in a cart behind Dobbin was odious. Could not Mr. Hewitt hire a phaeton, or borrow a gig? However, as her sister seemed to wish it, she might perhaps go, if she could find no better

conveyance." And with this concession the lover was contented; the more especially as the destined finery was in active preparation. Flounces, furbelows, and frippery of all descriptions, enough to stock a milliner's shop, did Hetta produce for the adornment of her fair person; and Robert looked on in silence, sometimes thinking how pretty she would look; sometimes, how soon he would put an end to such nonsense when once they were married; and sometimes, how odd a figure he and Dobbin should cut by the side of so much beauty and fashion.

Neither Dobbin nor his master were fated to be so honoured. The evening before the Races there happened to be a revel at Whitley Wood: thither Hetta repaired; and there she had the ill-fortune to be introduced to Monsieur Auguste, a young Frenchman, who had lately hired a room at B., where he vended eau de Cologne and French toys and essences, and did himself the honour, as his bills expressed, to cut the hair and the corns of the nobility and gentry of the town and neighbourhood. Monsieur was a dark, sallow, foreign-looking personage, with tremendous whiskers, who looked at once fierce and foppish, was curled and perfumed in a manner that did honour to his double profession, and wore gold rings in his ears and on his fingers, a huge bunch of seals at his side, and a gaudy brooch at his bosom. Small chance had Robert Hewitt against such a rival, especially when, smitten with her beauty or her hundred pounds, he devoted himself to Hetta's service, made fine speeches in most bewitching broken English, braved for her

sake the barbarities of a country dance, and promised to initiate her into the mysteries of the waltz and the quadrille; and, finally requested the honour to conduct her in a cabriolet the next day to Ascot Races. Small chance had our poor farmer against such a Monsieur.

The morning arrived, gloomy, showery, and cold, and at the appointed hour up drove the punctual Robert, in a new market cart, painted blue, with red wheels, and his heavy but handsome horse Dobbin (who was indeed upon occasion the fore horse of the team), as sleek and shining as good feed and good dressing could make him. Up drove Robert with his little sister (a child of eleven years old, who was to form one of the party) sitting at his side; whilst equally punctual, at Master

Coxe's door, stood the sisters ready dressed, Mary in a new dark gown, a handsome shawl, and a pretty straw bonnet, with a cloth cloak hanging on her arm; Hetta in a flutter of gauze and ribbons, pink and green, and yellow and blue, looking like a parrot tulip, or a milliner's doll, or a picture of the fashions in the Lady's Magazine, or like anything under the sun but an English country girl. Robert looked at her and then at Mary

who was vainly endeavouring to persuade her to put on, or at least to take, a cloak, and thought for once without indignation of his mother's advice; he got out, however, and was preparing to assist them into the cart, when suddenly, to the astonishment of everybody but Hetta, for she had said nothing at home of her encounter at the revel, Monsieur Auguste made his appearance in a hired gig of the most wretched description; drawn by an equally miserable jade, alighted at the house

and claimed Mademoiselle's promise to do him the honour to accompany him in his cabriolet. The consternation was general. Mary remonstrated with her sister mildly but earnestly; Master Coxe swore she should not go; but Hetta was resolute; and Farmer Hewitt, whose first impulse had been to drub the Frenchman, changed his purpose when he saw how willing she was to be carried off. "Let her go," said he; "Monsieur is welcome to her company; for my part, I think they are well matched. It would be a pity to part them." And lifting Mary rapidly into the cart, he drove off at a pace of which Dobbin, to judge from his weight, appeared incapable, and to which that illustrious steed was very little accustomed.

In the meanwhile Hetta was endeavouring to introduce her new beau to her father, and to reconcile him to her change of escort; and the standers-by, consisting of half the men and boys in the village, were criticising the Frenchman's equipage. "I could shake the old chaise to pieces with one jerk, it's so ramshackle," cried Ned Jones, Master Coxe's foreman. "The wheel will come to pieces long before they get to Ascot," added Sam, the apprentice. "The old horse has a spavin in the off fore leg; that's what makes him so lame," said Will Ford, the blacksmith. "And he has been down within the month. Look at his knees!" rejoined Jem, the carter. "He's blind of an eye," exclaimed one urchin. "He shies," cried another. "The reins are rotten," observed Dick, the collarmaker. "The Frenchman can't drive," remarked Jack, the drover, coming up to join the crew; "he'd as nearly as possible run foul of my pigs." "He'll

certainly overturn her, poor thing," cried one kind friend, as, overcome by her importunities, her father at length consented to her departure. "The chaise will break down," said another. "Break! he'll break her neck," added a third. "They'll be drenched to the skin in this shower," exclaimed a fourth; and amidst these consoling predictions the happy couple departed.

Robert and Mary, on their side, proceeded for some time in almost total silence! Robert too angry for speech, and Mary feeling herself, however innocent, involved in the consequences of her sister's delinquency; so that little passed beyond Anne Hewitt's delighted remarks on the beauty of the country, and

the hedge-rows, bright with the young leaves of the oak, and gay with the pearly thorn blossoms and the delicate briar-rose; and her occasional exclamations at the sudden appearance of some tiny wren, or the peculiar interrupted flight of some water-wagtail, as he threw himself forward, then rested for a moment, self-poised in the air, then started on again with an up-and-down motion, like a ball tossed from the hand, keeping by the side of the cart for half a mile or more, as is frequently the way with that sociable bird. Little passed beyond trifles such as these, until Robert turned suddenly round to his companion with the abrupt question: "Pray, Miss Mary, do you like Frenchmen?" "I never was acquainted with any," replied Mary; "but I think I should like Englishmen best. It seems natural to prefer one's own countrymen." "Ay, to be sure!" replied Robert; "to be sure it is! You are a sensible girl, Mary Coxe; and a good girl. It would be well for your sister if she had some of your sense." "Hetta is a good girl, I assure you, Farmer Hewitt; a very good girl," rejoined Mary, warmly, "and does not want sense. But only consider how young she is, and her having no mother, and being a little spoilt by my poor aunt, and so pretty, and everybody talking nonsense to her, no wonder that she should sometimes be a little wrong, as she was this morning. But I hope that we shall meet her on the course, and that all will go right again. Hetta is a good girl, and will make a good wife." "To a Frenchman," replied Robert, drily; and the conversation turned to other subjects, and was kept up with cheerfulness and good humour till they reached Ascot.

Anne and Mary enjoyed the Races much. They saw the line of carriages, nine deep—more carriages than they thought ever were built ; and the people—more people than they thought the whole world could hold ; had a confused view of the horses and a distinct one of the riders' jackets ; and Anne, whose notions on the subject of racing had been rather puzzled, so far enlarged her knowledge and improved her mind as to comprehend that yellow, crimson, green, and blue, in short, all the colours of the rainbow, were trying which should come first to the winning post : they saw Punch, a puppet show, several peep shows, and

the dancing dogs; admired the matchless display of beauty and elegance when the weather allowed the ladies to walk up and down the course; were amused at the bustle and hurry-scurry, when a sudden shower drove them to the shelter of their carriages; saw the Duke of Wellington; had a merry nod from the lively boy, Prince George; and had the honour of sharing, with some thousands of his subjects, a most graceful bow and most gracious smile from his Majesty. In short, they had seen everything and everybody, except Hetta and her beau; and nothing had been wanting to Mary's gratification, but the assurance of her sister's safety; for Mary had that prime qualification for a sightseer, the habit of thinking much of what she came to see and little of herself. She made light of all inconveniences, covered little Anne (a delicate child) with her own cloak during the showers, and contrived, in spite of Robert's gallant attention to his guest, that Anne should have the best place under the umbrella, and the most tempting portion of the provisions; so that our farmer, by no means wanting in moral taste, was charmed with her cheerfulness, her good humour, and the total absence of vanity and selfishness; and when, on her ascending the cart to return, he caught a glimpse of a pretty foot and ankle, and saw how much exercise and pleasure had heightened her complexion and brightened her hazel eyes, he could not help thinking to himself, "My mother was right. She's ten times handsomer than her sister, and has twenty times more sense; and, besides, she does not like Frenchmen."

But where could Hetta be? What had become of poor Hetta?

This question, which had pressed so frequently on Mary's mind during the Races, became still more painful as they proceeded on their road home, which, leading through cross country lanes, far away from the general throng of the visitors, left more leisure for her affectionate fears. They had driven about two miles, and Robert was endeavouring to comfort her with hopes that their

horse's lameness had forced them back again, and that her sister would be found safe at Aberleigh, when a sudden turn in the lane discovered a disabled gig, without a horse or driver, in the middle of the road, and a woman seated on a bank by the side of a ditch--a miserable object, tattered, dirty, shivering, drenched, and crying as if her heart would break. Was it, could it be Hetta? Yes, Hetta it was! All the misfortunes that had been

severally predicted at their outset had befallen the unfortunate pair. Before they had travelled three miles, their wretched horse had fallen lame in his near fore leg, and had cast the off hind shoe, which, as the blacksmith of the place was gone to the Races, and nobody seemed willing to put himself out of the way to oblige a Frenchman, had nearly stopped them at the beginning of their expedition. At last, however, they met with a man who undertook to shoe their steed, and whose want of skill added a prick to their other calamities; then Monsieur Auguste broke a shaft of the cabriolet by driving against a post, the setting and bandaging of which broken limb made another long delay; then came a pelting shower, during which they were forced to stand under a tree; then they lost their way, and owing to the people of whom Monsieur inquired not understanding his English, and Monsieur not understanding theirs, went full five miles round about; then they arrived at the "Chequers" public-house, which no effort could induce their horse to pass, so there they stopped perforce to bait and feed; then when they were getting on as well as could be expected of a horse with three lame legs and a French driver, a waggon came past them, carried away their wheel, threw Monsieur Auguste into the hedge, and lodged Miss Henrietta in the ditch. So now the beau was gone to the next village for assistance, and the belle was waiting his return on the bank; and poor Hetta was evidently tired of her fine lover and the manifold misadventures which his unlucky gallantry had brought upon her, and accepted very thankfully the offer which Anne and Mary made, and Robert did not oppose, of taking her

into the cart, and leaving a line written in pencil on a leaf of Mary's pocket-book, to inform Monsieur of her safety. Heartily glad was poor Hetta to find herself behind the good steed Dobbin, under cover of her sister's warm cloak, pitied and comforted, and in a fair way to get home. Heartily glad would she have been, too, to have found herself reinstated in the good graces of her old admirer. But of that she saw no sign. Indeed, the good yeoman took some pains to show that, although he bore no malice, his courtship was over. He goes, however, oftener than ever to the carpenter's house ; and the gossips of Aberleigh say that this jaunt to Ascot will have its proper and usual catastrophe, a merry wedding ; that Robert Hewitt will be the happy bridegroom, but that Hetta Coxe will not be the bride.

THE CHINA JUG.

ONE of the prettiest rustic dwellings in our pretty neighbourhood, is the picturesque farm-house which stands on the edge of Wokefield Common, so completely in a bottom, that the passengers who traverse the high road see indeed the smoke from the chimneys floating like a vapour over the woody hill which

forms the back-ground, but cannot even catch a glimpse of the roof so high does the turfy common rise above it; whilst so steeply does the ground decline to the door, that it seems as if no animal less accustomed to tread the hillside than a goat or a chamois could venture to descend the narrow footpath which winds round the declivity, and forms the nearest way to the village. The cart-track, thridding the mazes of the hills, leads to the house by a far longer but very beautiful road; the smooth fine turf of the common varied by large tufts of furze and broom rising in an abrupt bank on one side, on the other a narrow well-timbered valley, bordered by hanging woods, and terminated by a large sheet of water, close beside which stands the farm, a low irregular cottage snugly thatched, and its different out-buildings, all on the smallest scale, but giving the air of comfort and habitation to the spot that nothing can so thoroughly convey as an English barnyard with its complement of cows, pigs, horses, chickens, and children.

One part of the way thither is singularly beautiful. It is where a bright and sparkling spring has formed itself into a clear pond in a deep broken hollow by the road side: the bank all around covered with rich grass, and descending in unequal terraces to the pool: whilst on every side around it, and at different heights, stand ten or twelve noble elms, casting their green shadows mixed with the light clouds and the blue summer sky on the calm and glassy water, and giving (especially when one evening sun lights up the little grove, causing the rugged trunks to shine like gold, and the pendent leaves to glitter like

the burnished wings of the rose beetle) a sort of pillared and columnar dignity to the scene.

Seldom too would that fountain, famous for the purity and sweetness of its waters, be without some figure suited to the landscape; child, woman, or country girl, leaning from the

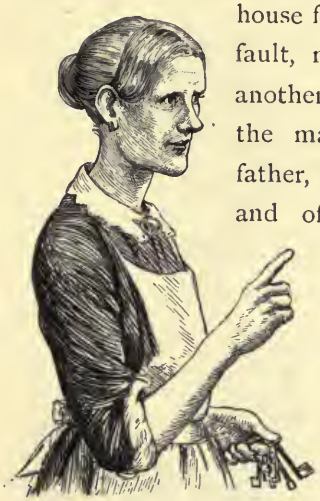
plank extended over the spring, to fill her pitcher, or returning with it, supported by one arm on her head, recalling all classical and pastoral images, the beautiful sculptures of Greece, the poetry of Homer and of Sophocles, and even more than these, the habits of oriental life, and the Rachels and Rebeccas of Scripture.

Seldom would that spring be without some such figure ascending the turfy steps into the lane, of whom one might inquire respecting the sequestered farm-house, whose rose-covered porch was seen so prettily from a turn in the road; and often it would be one of the farmer's children who would answer you; for in spite of the vicinity of the great pond, all the water for domestic use was regularly brought from the Elmin Spring.

Wokefield-Pond Farm was a territory of some thirty acres; one of the "little bargains," as they are called, which once abounded, but are now seldom found, in Berkshire; and at the time to which our story refers, that is to say, about twenty years ago, its inhabitants were amongst the poorest and most industrious people in the country.

George Mearing was the only son of a rich yeoman in the parish, who held this "little bargain" in addition to the manor farm. George was an honest, thoughtless, kind-hearted, good-humoured lad, quite unlike his father, who, shrewd, hard, and money-getting, often regretted his son's deficiency in the qualities by which he had risen in the world, and reserved all his favour and affection for one who possessed them in full perfection,—

his only daughter, Martha. Martha was a dozen years older than her brother, with a large bony figure, a visage far from prepossessing, a harsh voice, and a constitutional scold, which, scrupulous in her cleanliness, and vigilant in her economy, was in full activity all day long. She seemed to go about the house for no other purpose than that of finding fault, maundering now at one, and now at another,—her brother, the carters, the odd boy, the maid,—every one, in short, except her father, who connecting the ideas of scolding and of good housewifery, thought that he gained or at least saved money by the constant exercise of this accomplishment, and listened to her accordingly with great delight and admiration: "her mother," thought he to himself, "was a clever managing woman, and sorry enough was I to lose her; but gracious me, she was nothing to Martha! where she spoke one word, Martha speaks ten."



The rest of the family heard this eternal din with far less complacency. They agreed, indeed, that she could not help scolding, that it was her way, and that they were all fools to take notice of it; but yet they would flee, one and all, before the outpouring of her wrath, like birds before a thunder shower.

The person on whom the storm fell oftenest and loudest was of course her own immediate subject, the maid; and of the

many damsels who had undergone the discipline of Martha's tongue, none was ever more the object of her objurgation, or deserved it less, than Dinah Moore. But Dinah had many sins in her stern mistress's eyes, which would hardly have been accounted such elsewhere. In the first place she was young and pretty, and to youth and beauty Martha had strong objections; then she was somewhat addicted to rustic finery, especially in the article of pink top-knots,—and to rosy ribbons Martha had almost as great an aversion as to rosy cheeks; then again the young lass had a spirit, and when unjustly accused would vindicate herself with more wit than prudence, and better-tempered persons than Martha cannot abide that qualification; moreover the little damsel had an irresistible lightness of heart, and a gaiety of temper, which no rebuke could tame, no severity repress; laughter was as natural to her as chiding to her mistress; all her labours went merrily on; she would sing over the mashing tub, and smile through the washing week, out-singing Martha's scolding, and out-smiling Martha's frowns.

This in itself would have been sufficient cause of offence: but when Martha fancied, and fancied truly, that the pink top-knots, the smiles, and the songs were all aimed at the heart of

her brother George, of whom, in her own rough way, she was both fond and proud, the pretty songstress became insupportable: and when George, in despite of her repeated warnings, did actually one fine morning espouse Dinah Moore, causing her in her agitation to let fall an old-fashioned china wash-hand basin, the gift of a long-deceased godmother, which, with the jug belonging to it, she valued more than any other of her earthly possessions; no wonder that she made a vow never to speak to her brother whilst she lived, or that, more in resentment than in covetousness, (for Martha Mearing was rather a harsh and violent, than an avaricious woman,) she encouraged her father in his angry resolution of banishing the culprit from his house, and disinheriting him from his property.

Old Farmer Mearing was not, however, a wicked man, although in many respects a hard one. He did not turn his son out to starve: on the contrary, he settled him in the Pond Farm, with a decent though scanty plenishing,—put twenty pounds in his pocket, and told him that he had nothing more to expect from him, and that he must make his own way in the world as he had done forty years before.

George's heart would have sunk under this denunciation, for he was of a kind but weak and indolent nature, and wholly accustomed to depend on his father, obey his orders, and rely on him for support; but he was sustained by the bolder and firmer spirit of his wife, who, strong, active, lively, and sanguine, finding herself for the first time in her life her own mistress, in possession of a comfortable home, and married to the man of

her heart, saw nothing but sunshine before them. Dinah had risen in the world, and George had fallen; and this circumstance, in addition to an original difference of temperament, may sufficiently account for their difference of feeling.

During the first year or two, Dinah's prognostics seemed likely to be verified. George ploughed and sowed and reaped, and she made butter, reared poultry, and fatted pigs: and their industry prospered, and the world went well with the young couple. But a bad harvest, the death of their best cow, the lameness of their most serviceable horse, and more than all, perhaps, the birth of four little girls in four successive years, crippled them sadly, and brought poverty and the fear of poverty to their happy fireside.

Still, however, Dinah's spirit continued undiminished. Her children, although, to use her own phrase, "of the wrong sort," grew and flourished, as the children of poor people do grow and flourish, one hardly knows how; and by the time that the long-wished-for boy made his appearance in the world, the elder girls had become almost as useful to their father as if they had been "of the right sort" themselves. Never were seen such hardy and handy little elves! They drove the plough, tended the kine, folded the sheep, fed the pigs, worked in the garden, made the hay, hoed the turnips, reaped the corn, hacked the beans, and drove the market cart to B—— on occasion, and sold the butter, eggs, and poultry as well as their mother could have done.

Strong, active, and serviceable as boys were the little lasses,

and pretty withal, though as brown as so many gipsies, and as untrained as wild colts. They had their mother's bright and sparkling countenance, and her gay and sunny temper, a heritage more valuable than house or land,—a gift more precious than ever was bestowed on a favoured princess by beneficent fairy. But the mother's darling was one who bore no resemblance to her either in mind or person, her only son and youngest child Moses, so called after his grandfather, in a lurking hope, which was however disappointed, that the name might propitiate the offended and wealthy yeoman.

Little Moses was a fair, mild, quiet boy, who seemed at first sight far fitter to wear petticoats than any one of his madcap sisters; but there was an occasional expression in his deep grey eye that gave token of sense and spirit, and an unfailing steadiness and diligence about the child that promised to vindicate his mother's partiality. She was determined that Moses should be, to use the country phrase, "a good scholar;" the meaning of which is, by the way, not a little dissimilar from that which the same words bear at Oxford or at Cambridge. Poor Dinah was no "scholar" herself, as the parish register can testify, where her mark stands below George's signature in the record of her marriage; and the girls bade fair to emu-

late their mother's ignorance, Dinah having given to each of the four the half of a year's schooling, upon the principle of ride and tie, little Lucy going one day, and little Patty the next, and so on with the succeeding pair; in this way adroitly educating two children for the price of one, their mother in her secret soul holding it for girls a waste of time. But when Moses came in question the case was altered. He was destined to enjoy the benefit of an entire education, and to imbibe unshared all the learning that the parish pedagogue could bestow. An admission to the Wokefield free-school insured him this advantage, together with the right of wearing the long primitive blue cloth coat and leathern girdle, as well as the blue cap and yellow tassel, by which the boys were distinguished; and by the time he was eight years old, he had made such progress in the arts of writing and ciphering, that he was pronounced by the master to be the most promising pupil in the school.

At this period, misfortunes, greater than they had hitherto known, began to crowd around his family. Old Farmer Mearing died, leaving all his property to Martha; and George, a broken-hearted, toil-worn man, who had been only supported in his vain efforts to make head against ill-fortune by the hope of his father at last relenting, followed him to the grave in less than two months. Debt and difficulty beset the widow, and even her health and spirits began to fail. Her only resource seemed to be to leave her pleasant home, give up everything to the creditors, get her girls out to service, and try to

maintain herself and Moses by washing or charing, or whatever work her failing strength would allow her to perform.

Martha, or, as she was now called, Mrs. Martha, lived on in lonely and apparently comfortless affluence at the Manor Farm, She had taken no notice of Dinah's humble supplications. sent injudiciously by Patty, a girl whose dark and sparkling beauty exactly resembled what her mother had been before her unfortunate marriage; but on Moses, so like his father, she had been seen to gaze wistfully and tenderly, when the little procession of charity boys passed her on their way to church; though on finding herself observed, or perhaps on detecting herself in such an indulgence, the softened eye was immediately withdrawn, and the stern spirit seemed to gather itself into a resolution only the stronger for its momentary weakness.

Mrs. Martha, now long past the middle of life, and a confirmed old maid, had imbibed a few of the habits and peculiarities which are supposed, and perhaps justly, to characterise that condition. Amongst other things she had a particular fancy for the water from the Elmin Spring, and could not relish her temperate supper if washed down by any other beverage; and she was accustomed to fetch it herself in the identical china jug, the present of her godmother, the basin belonging to which she had broken from the shock she underwent when hearing of George's wedding. It is even possible, so much are we the creatures of association, that the constant sight of this favourite piece of porcelain, which was really of

very curious and beautiful Nankin china, might, by perpetually reminding her of her loss, and the occasion, serve to confirm her inveterate aversion to poor George and his family.

However this might be, it chanced that one summer evening

Mrs. Martha sallied forth to fetch the sparkling draught from the Elmin Spring. She filled her jug as usual, but much rain had fallen, and the dame, no longer so active as she had been, slipped when about to re-ascend the bank with her burthen, and found herself compelled either to throw herself forward and grasp the trunk of the nearest tree, to the imminent peril of her china jug, of which she was compelled to let go, or to slide back to the already tottering and slippery plank, at the risk, almost the certainty, of plunging head foremost into the water. If Mrs. Martha had been asked, on level ground and out of danger, whether she preferred to be soused in her own person, or to break her china jug, she would, most undoubtedly, theoretically have chosen the ducking; but theory and practice are different matters, and following the instinct of self-preservation, she let the dear mug go, and clung to the tree.

As soon as she was perfectly safe she began to lament, in her usual vituperative strain, over her irreparable loss, scolding the tottering plank and the slippery bank, and finally, there being no one else to bear the blame, her own heedless haste, which had cost her the commodity she valued most in the world. Swinging herself round, however, still supported by the tree, she had the satisfaction to perceive that the dear jug was not yet either sunken or broken. It rested most precariously on a tuft of bulrushes towards the centre of the pool, in instant danger of both these calamities, and, indeed, appeared to her to be visibly sinking under its own weight.

What could she do? She could never reach it; and whilst she went to summon assistance, the precious porcelain would vanish. What could she do?

Just as she was asking herself this question, she had the satisfaction to hear footsteps in the lane. She called; and a small voice was heard singing, and the little man Moses, with his satchel at his back, made his appearance, returning from school. He had not heard her, and she would not call him—not even to preserve her china treasure. Moses, however, saw the dilemma, and pausing only to pull off his coat, plunged into the water, to rescue the sinking cup.

The summer had been wet, and the pool was unusually high, and Mrs. Martha, startled to perceive that he was almost immediately beyond his depth, called to him earnestly and vehemently to return. The resolute boy, however, accustomed from infancy to dabble like the young water-fowl amidst the sedges and islets of the great pond, was not to be frightened by the puny waters of the Elmin Spring. He reached, though at some peril, the tuft of bulrushes—brought the jug triumphantly to land—washed it—filled it at the fountain-head, and finally offered it, with his own sweet and gracious smile, to Mrs. Martha. And she—oh! what had she not suffered during the last few moments, whilst the poor orphan—her brother George's only boy—was risking his life to preserve for her a paltry bit of earthenware! What had she not felt during those few but long moments! Her woman's heart melted within her; and instead of seizing the precious porce-

lain, she caught the dripping boy in her arms—half-smothered him with kisses, and vowed that her home should be his home, and her fortune his fortune.

And she kept her word,—she provided amply and kindly for Dinah and her daughters; but Moses is her heir, and he lives at the Manor Farm, and is married to the prettiest woman in the country; and Mrs. Martha has betaken herself to the Pond-side, with a temper so much ameliorated, that the good farmer declares the greatest risk his children run is, of being spoilt by aunt Martha:—one in particular, her godson, who has inherited the name and the favour of his father, and is her own especial little Moses.

DORA CRESWELL.

FEW things are more delightful than to saunter along these green lanes of ours, in the busy harvest-time; the deep verdure of the hedge-rows, and the strong shadow of the trees, contrasting so vividly with the fields, partly waving with golden corn, partly studded with regular piles of heavy wheatsheaves; the whole population abroad; the whole earth teeming with fruitfulness, and the bright autumn sun careering overhead, amidst

the deep blue sky, and the fleecy clouds of the most glowing, and least fickle of the seasons. Even a solitary walk loses its loneliness in the general cheerfulness of nature. The air is gay with bees and butterflies; the robin twitters from amongst the ripening hazel-nuts; and you cannot proceed a quarter of a mile without encountering some merry group of leasers or some long line of majestic wains, groaning under their rich burden, brushing the close hedges on either side, and knocking their tall tops against the overhanging trees; the very image of ponderous plenty.

Pleasant, however, as such a procession is to look at, it is somewhat dangerous to meet, especially in a narrow lane; and I thought myself very fortunate one day last August, in being so near a five-barred gate, as to be enabled to escape from a *cortége* of labourers, and harvest-waggons, sufficiently bulky and noisy to convoy half the wheat in the parish. On they went, men, women, and children, shouting, laughing, and singing in joyous expectation of the coming harvest-home; the very waggons nodding from side to side, as if tipsy, and threatening every moment to break down bank, and tree, and hedge, and crush every obstacle that opposed them. It would have been as safe to encounter the car of Juggernaut; I blessed my stars for my escape; and after leaning on the friendly gate until the last gleaner had passed, a ragged rogue of seven years old, who with hair as white as flax, a skin as brown as a berry, and features as grotesque as an Indian idol, was brandishing his tuft of wheat-ears, and shrieking forth, in a shrill, childish voice, and

with a most ludicrous gravity, the popular song of "Buy a broom." After watching this young gentleman (the urchin is of my acquaintance) as long as a curve in the lane would permit, I turned to examine in what spot chance had placed me, and

found before my eyes another picture of rural life, but one as different from that which I had just witnessed, as the Arcadian peasants of Poussin from the Boors of Teniers, or weeds from flowers, or poetry from prose.

I had taken refuge in a harvest-field belonging to my good neighbour, Farmer Creswell; a beautiful child lay on the ground at some little distance, whilst a young girl, resting from the labour of reaping, was twisting a rustic wreath of enamelled corn-flowers, brilliant poppies, snow white lily-bines, and light, fragile hare-bells, mingled with tufts of the richest wheat-ears, around its hat.

There was something in the tender youthfulness of these two innocent creatures, in the pretty, though somewhat fantastic occupation of the girl, the fresh wild-flowers, the ripe and swelling corn that harmonised with the season and the hour, and conjured up memories of "Dis and Proserpine," and of all that is gorgeous and graceful, in old mythology; of the lovely Lavinia of our own poet, and, of that finest pastoral of the world, the far lovelier Ruth. But these fanciful associations soon vanished before the real sympathy excited by the actors of the scene, both of whom were known to me, and both objects of a sincere and lively interest.

The young girl, Dora Creswell, was the orphan niece of one of the wealthiest yeomen in our part of the world, the only child of his only brother; and having lost both her parents whilst still an infant, had been reared by her widowed uncle as fondly and carefully as his own son Walter. He said that he loved her quite as well, perhaps he loved her better; for though it was impossible for a father not to be proud of the bold handsome youth, who at eighteen had a man's strength, a man's stature, was the best ringer, the best cricketer, and the best shot in the county; yet the fairy Dora, who, nearly ten years younger, was at once his handmaid, his housekeeper, his plaything, and his companion, was evidently the apple of his eye. Our good farmer vaunted her accomplishments, as men of his class are wont to boast of a high-bred horse, or a favourite greyhound.

She could make a shirt and a pudding, darn stockings, rear poultry, keep accounts, and read the newspaper; was as famous

for gooseberry wine as Mrs. Primrose, and could compound a syllabub with any dairy-woman in the county. There was not so handy a little creature anywhere; so thoughtful and trusty about the house, and yet out of doors as gay as a lark, and as

wild as the wind: nobody was like his Dora. So said, and so thought, Farmer Creswell: and before Dora was ten years old, he had resolved that in due time she should marry his son, Walter, and had informed both parties of his intention.

Now, Farmer Creswell's intentions were well known to be as unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. He was a fair specimen of an English yeoman, a tall, square-built, muscular man, stout and active, with a resolute countenance, a keen eye, and an intelligent smile; his temper was boisterous and irascible, generous and kind to those whom he loved, but quick to take offence, and slow to pardon, expecting and exacting implicit obedience from all about him. With all Dora's good gifts, the sweet and yielding nature of the gentle and submissive little girl, was undoubtedly the chief cause of her uncle's partiality. Above all, he was obstinate in the highest degree, had never been known to yield a point, or change a resolution; and the fault was the more inveterate, because he called it firmness, and accounted it a virtue. For the rest, he was a person of excellent principle, and perfect integrity, clear-headed, prudent and sagacious: fond of agricultural experiments, which he pursued cautiously, and successfully; a good farmer and a good man.

His son Walter, who was in person a handsome likeness of his father, resembled him also in many points of character, was equally obstinate, and far more fiery, hot, and bold. He loved his pretty cousin, much as he would have loved a favourite sister, and might very possibly, if let alone, have become attached to her as his father wished; but to be dictated to, to be chained down to a distant engagement, to hold himself bound to a mere child; the very idea was absurd; and restraining with difficulty an abrupt denial, he walked down into the

village, predisposed, out of sheer contradiction, to fall in love with the first young woman who should come in his way; and he did fall in love accordingly.

Mary Hay, the object of his ill-fated passion, was the daughter of the respectable mistress of a small endowed school at the other end of the parish. She was a delicate, interesting creature, with a slight, drooping figure, and a fair, downcast face like a snowdrop, forming such a contrast with her gay and gallant wooer, as Love, in his vagaries, is often pleased to bring together.

The courtship was secret and tedious, and prolonged from months to years; for Mary shrank from the painful contest which she knew that an avowal of their attachment would occasion. At length her mother died, and, deprived of home and maintenance, she reluctantly consented to a private marriage; an immediate discovery ensued, and was followed by all the evils, and more than all, that her worst fears had anticipated. Her husband was turned from the house of his father, and in less than three months, his death, by an inflammatory fever, left her a desolate and penniless widow—unowned and unassisted by the stern parent, on whose unrelenting temper neither the death of his son nor the birth of his grandson seemed to make the slightest impression. But for the general sympathy excited by the deplorable situation and blameless demeanour of the widowed bride, she and her infant might have taken refuge in the workhouse. The whole neighbourhood was zealous to relieve and to serve them; but their most liberal benefactress,

their most devoted friend, was poor Dora. Considering her uncle's partiality to herself as the primary cause of all this misery, she felt like a guilty creature; and casting off at once her native timidity and habitual submission, she had repeatedly braved his anger, by the most earnest supplications for mercy and for pardon; and when this proved unavailing, she tried to mitigate their distresses by all the assistance that her small means would permit. Every shilling of her pocket-money she expended upon her poor cousins; worked for them, begged for them, and transferred to them every present that was made to herself, from a silk frock to a penny tartlet. Everything that was her own she gave, but nothing of her uncle's; for, though sorely tempted to transfer some of the plenty around her to those whose claims seemed so just, and whose need was so urgent, Dora felt that she was trusted, and that she must prove herself trustworthy.

Such was the posture of affairs at the time of my encounter with Dora and little Walter in the harvest-field; the rest will be best told in the course of our dialogue.

"And so, madam! I cannot bear to see my dear cousin Mary so sick, and so melancholy; and the dear, dear child, that a king might be proud of,—only look at him!" exclaimed Dora interrupting herself, as the beautiful child, sitting on the ground, in all the placid dignity of infancy, looked up at me and smiled in my face; "only look at him," continued she, "and think of that dear boy and his dear mother living on charity, and they my uncle's lawful heirs, whilst I, who have no right whatever, no

claim at all—I, that, compared to them, am but a far-off kinswoman, the mere creature of his bounty, should revel in comfort and in plenty, and they starving! I cannot bear it and I will not. And then the wrong that he is doing himself, he that is really so good and kind, to be called a hard-hearted tyrant by the whole country side. And he is unhappy himself too; I know that he is; so tired as he comes home, he will walk about his room half the night; and often at meal times he will drop his knife and fork, and sigh so heavily. He may turn me out of doors, as he threatened; or, what is worse, call me ungrateful, or undutiful; but he shall see this boy."

"He never has seen him, then; and that is the reason you are tricking him out so prettily?"

"Yes, ma'am. Mind what I told you, Walter, and hold up your hat, and say what I bid you."

"Ganpapa's fowers!" stammered the pretty boy, in his sweet childish voice, the first words that I ever heard him speak.

"Grandpapa's flowers!" said his zealous preceptress.

"Ganpapa's fowers!" echoed the boy.

"Shall you take the child to the house, Dora?" asked I.

"No, ma'am, for I look for my uncle here every minute, and this is the best place to ask a favour in, for the very sight of the great crop puts him in good humour; not so much on account of the profits, but because the land never bore half so much before, and it's all owing to the management in dressing and drilling. I came reaping here to-day, on purpose to please him; for though he says he does not wish me to work in the fields, I

know he likes it; and here he shall see little Walter. Do you think he can resist him, ma'am?" continued Dora, leaning over her infant cousin, and with the grace and fondness of a young Madonna; "do you think he can resist him, poor child! so helpless, so harmless; his own blood too, and so like his father, no

heart could be hard enough to hold out, and I am sure that he will not. Only," pursued Dora, relapsing into her girlish tone and attitude, as a cold fear crossed her enthusiastic hope, "only I'm half-afraid that Walter will cry. It's strange, when one wants anything to behave particularly well, how sure it is to

be naughty ; my pets especially. I remember when my Lady Countess came on purpose to see our white peacock, that we got in a present from India, the obstinate bird ran away behind a bean-stack, and would not spread his train, to show the dead white spots on his glossy white feathers, all we could do. Her ladyship was quite angry. And my red and yellow marvel of Peru, which used to blow at four in the afternoon, as regular as the clock struck, was not open the other day at five, when dear Miss Ellen came to paint it, though the sun was shining as bright as it does now. If Walter should scream and cry, for my uncle does look so stern ; and then it's Saturday, and he has such a beard ! if the child should be frightened ! Be sure, Walter, you don't cry ! " said Dora, in great alarm.

" Ganpapa's fowers," replied the smiling boy, holding up his hat ; and his young protectress was comforted.

At that moment the farmer was heard whistling to his dog in a neighbouring field, and fearful that my presence might injure the cause, I departed, my thoughts full of the noble little girl and her generous purpose.

I had promised to call the next afternoon, to learn her success ; and passing the harvest-field in my way, I found a group assembled there, which instantly dissipated my anxiety. On the very spot where we had parted, I saw the good farmer himself, in his Sunday clothes, tossing little Walter in the air ; the child laughing and screaming with delight, and his grandfather apparently quite as much delighted as himself. A pale, slender young woman, in deep mourning, stood looking at their

gambols with an air of intense thankfulness! and Dora, the cause and sharer of all this happiness, was loitering behind, playing with the flowers in Walter's hat, which she was holding in her hand. Catching my eye, the sweet girl came to me instantly.

"I see how it is, my dear Dora! and I give you joy from the bottom of my heart. Little Walter behaved well then?"

"Oh, he behaved like an angel!"

"Did he say, ganpapa's fowers?"

"Nobody spoke a word. The moment the child took off his hat, and looked up, the truth seemed to flash on my uncle, and to melt his heart at once, the boy is so like his father. He knew him instantly, and caught him up in his arms, and hugged him just as he is hugging him now."

"And the beard, Dora?"

"Why, that seemed to take the child's fancy; he put up his little hands and stroked it; and laughed in his grandfather's face, and flung his chubby arms round his neck, and held out his sweet mouth to be kissed; and how my uncle did kiss him! I thought he never would have done; and then he sat down on a wheat-sheaf and cried; and I cried too! Very strange that one should cry for happiness!" added Dora, as some large drops fell on the wreath which she was adjusting round Walter's hat. "Very strange," repeated she, looking up with a bright smile, and brushing away the tears from her rosy cheeks with a bunch of corn-flowers. "Very strange that I should cry, when I am the happiest creature alive; for Mary and Walter are to live

with us; and my dear uncle, instead of being angry with me, says that he loves me better than ever. How very strange it is," said Dora, as the tears poured down faster and faster, "that I should be so foolish as to cry!"

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